

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA

#361

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will focus on these words of Jesus: **"The disciple is not above his master: but everyone that is perfect shall be as his master"** (Luke 6:40 KJV) Since we now have 18 great-grandchildren, today's letter will focus on the awesome responsibility we have as parents to train our children to be like Jesus. We often say "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree". This is just another way of saying that our children will invariably be like us. Raising a child is an awesome responsibility! When every disciple is complete they will be like their teacher.

The importance of proper training is driven home by the story of Amala and Kamala, the wolf girls of Midnapore. Mythology is replete with stories of children who were raised by animals. One of the most famous, of course, is the mythical story of twin brothers, Romulus and Remus, who were supposedly suckled by a she wolf and later founded the city of Rome. The story of Amala and Kamala, however, is not a myth, it is well documented history. These famous girls have been the subject of scientific articles by noted professors like Arnold Gessel M.D. of Yale, Francis Maxfield, Ph.D. from Ohio State, and Kingsley Davis, Ph.D. from Penn State, as well as others.

Their story begins in North India in 1920. The Rev. J.A.L. Singh found two young girls in a cave inhabited by wolves. They appeared to be about 3 and 5 years of age, or perhaps a little older. The mother wolf died protecting them. The girls seemed to have no trace of being human. They refused clothing, ate only raw meat, slept curled up like a ball, and growled in their sleep. They howled at the moon, never smiled, and showed no interest in human companionship. They had walked on all fours for so long that their tendons and joints had shortened so that it was impossible for them to straighten their legs or walk upright. The point is, as Jesus said, the disciple will be like the teacher. These girls behaved like animals because animals were their only teachers.

Since Singh and his wife ran an orphanage the two girls became a part of their family. Singh did his best to wean them away from their animal habits and allow their hidden humanity to emerge. Unfortunately, the younger girl, Amala, soon got sick and died. This proved a great set back to Kamala who was just starting to lose her fear of humans. The older girl did make progress, but it was painfully slow. After 3 years she only had a vocabulary of 12 words. A normal two year old, by comparison, can easily learn 40 new words in a single week. Even though they massaged Kamala's legs and did everything possible to coax her to stand and walk, she never felt at ease while standing. Especially if she was in a hurry she would revert to running on all fours. After nine years in the orphanage Kamala was said to have the mind of a child only 3 1/2 years old.

The story broke in the news paper in 1926 and the experts debated whether this poor child would ever overcome her wolf like habits. Unfortunately, the question was never answered for she died of typhoid fever in 1929. The detailed story and pictures are available in a rare volume published by Harper in 1942, *Wolf Children and Feral Man*, by the Rev. J.A.L. Singh.

But now let us return to the words of Jesus: **"The disciple is not above his master: but everyone that is perfect shall be as his master"**. Matthew records the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20. In this passage Jesus commanded His disciples to evangelize the entire world. It is significant to note that to "make disciples" is the only imperative in this commission. It is the Greek word "mathateusate," which is the 2nd pers. pl. aor. 1, imper. act. of "matheuo." "Going", "baptizing", and "teaching", may have the force of commands, but they are written as participles. The primary emphasis given by Jesus in the Great Commission is to "make disciples".

The Greek word for "disciple" is "mathetes". It comes from "manthano" which means "to learn", and is the basis of our English word "math". The Dictionary of N.T. Theology states that the noun "mathetes" occurs 264 times in the N.T. (Exclusively in the Gospels and Acts) English readers will easily note the association between "discipleship" is "discipline".

I'm sure you are familiar with the story of Helen Keller. At the age of 19 months she suffered an illness that left her blind, deaf, and dumb. For the next few years she regressed to behaving like an animal. Her teacher, Anne Sullivan, corrected this problem by "discipline". With discipline Helen Keller became the first blind-deaf person to receive a BA degree. Helen also learned five different languages, and published 12 books together with numerous speeches and essays. Helen travelled to 39 different countries and became person friends with some of the most famous people in the world. She personally met every U.S. from Grover Cleveland to Lyndon Johnson. Anne Sullivan achieved this amazing success with Helen Keller not only by discipline, but by departing from traditional methods of teaching. Anne's teaching reminds us of the "Shema" found in Deut. 6:4-9: **"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."**

Little children are more important to God than they are to us. In fact, their angels constantly behold the face of our Heavenly Father. God has promised to punish anyone who causes one of these little ones to sin (Matt. 18:1-10). Please recognize your awesome responsibility as a parent. Surrender your life to Jesus Christ and discipline yourself to read the Bible, pray, and go to church. Ultimately, as Jesus said, when your children are mature they will be like you.

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce