



# The "O:h Y:eah!" Letter

## A Vision for Life

By Ami Loper

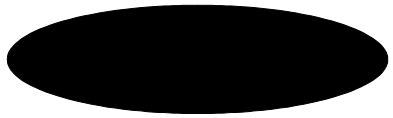
Raising Children. Some days it can seem like a battle. And when we feel like we're living in the trenches, it is easy to focus only on the temporary.

I remember 10 or 11 years ago - before Growing Kids God's Way - we felt like we were just shooting in the dark, trying to make good decisions but never knowing for sure if we were on the right track. I was filled with fear as I tried each day to direct a child who was lying, rebellious and hard hearted. One day, while crying out in desperation to God (desperation was a normal occurrence then!), the Lord gave me a Scripture and told me to paraphrase it slightly for Ashley. That verse is Psalm 42:11, "Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for (she) will yet praise Him, (her) Savior and (her) God." That verse gave me a promise and it also gave me a vision.

Proverbs 29:18 says, "Where there is no vision the people perish." And, boy, did I feel like I was perishing - with Ashley right along with me! But, I wrote that Scripture down on a card and kept it on my bathroom mirror. It was such an encouragement to me!

A funny thing began to happen with that vision though. I expected all the changes to take place in Ashley. She did change over the next several years - and dramatically - but I changed too. My eyes had been lifted. Lifted above the present, above the visible, above the

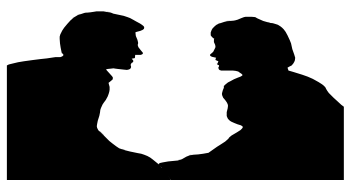
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- \* Are you giving your children the moral or practical reasons behind your instructions?
- \* Another of the Father's Mandates is to cultivate a sense of family identity, so who are you and what do you stand for?
- \* Remember you are not just raising your children, but the parents of your grandchildren! Are you parenting in such a way as to make your children want to parent like you?

## Quotes Worth

"A torn jacket is soon mended, but hard words bruise the heart of a child."  
~Henry Wadsworth



Don't forget - DATE NIGHT!

Hey! Did you know how important prayer is to your marriage? A recent Gallup Pole stated that CHRISTIAN marriages were failing at a rate of 1 out of 2. However, if those Christian couples prayed together daily, the rate dropped dramatically to 1 out of every 1,152! Get Praying! Stormie Omartian has a great series out that can help get you started, but don't wait for a crisis - avoid them by praying together!

Another part of praying together that Tim and I have learned in the last year, is praying these three prayers for your spouse: With eyes open, holding hands and facing one another, each of you spend 30 seconds praying a prayer of thankfulness for your spouse, then a prayer seeking forgiveness from God for the things done to your spouse and then a prayer of blessing over your spouse. You'll be amazed at the

## A Parenting Treasure from the Word

**d** "A servant cannot be corrected by mere words; though he understands, he will not respond." Proverbs 29:19. Words and actions go hand in hand. Yelling at a child to control their behavior is like honking your horn to try to steer your

## Announcements C

We will be starting our next Growing Kids God's Way early in January! If you've taken the class within the last couple of years, the cost is significantly reduced. Is it time for a retake? Call us soon to register and let your interested friends know it's that time of year again! Hope to see you there!

## Fun Idea of the Quarter

**S** Hey Dads, as Christmas time approaches, start looking for places where you can take your family "Christmas Light Hunting." Some local TV stations have lists on their web pages of the popular locations for spectacular Christmas light displays. Then plan an evening together as a family to find those place. Make popcorn and hot chocolate to eat and drink as you cruise the town! Be a kid with your kids! ~Tim

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difficulties and above the human. My eyes were refocused by God - to God. I began to see Ashley through God's eyes and speak that vision - that life - over her. As I did, my heart changed toward her. I no longer saw her just as my precious child who gave me grief, but now I also saw her as a child who had the Hand of God on her life and who had a future serving Him.

Have I always kept my eyes so flawlessly focused? I wish I could say yes, but there have been many more moments of desperation, fear and temptation to give up, but I must say those times were caused by me not keeping my focus on Ashley's Heavenly Father.

So, what are you facing today? Does your child sometimes feel like X

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a hopeless case? Does your marriage? What is God's vision of that situation? God is the God of life and not death! He seeks to resurrect those things that appear dead in our humanness. However, He often waits until we have come to the end of our human efforts and give Him the controls. God wants us dependent on Him!

God will resurrect that situation in your life - just as He resurrected Lazarus. But He asks us to participate by taking the grave clothes off our Lazarus! As you pray, He will give you the vision and He will also direct you to the actions you need to take.

With all our might we must trust God with the outcome and tenaciously holding to the vision He sets before us, always persevering, never giving up! Keep

## Books we love. . . . .

There is a series of books that our family really loves - especially at this time of the year! It is the "Family Celebrations" books by Ann Hibbard. She has written books for just about every season. "Family Celebrations at Thanksgiving and Halloween" (our favorite) will give you excellent ideas on how to help the family focus on thankfulness and awesome alternatives to Halloween. The Christmas book has ideas to make the season more meaningful and the Easter book is fabulous as well! Call your Christian