

# Freedom FOCUS

## NEWSLETTER

Fall 2010

“...to turn them  
from darkness  
to light...”

[www.indianabcc.com](http://www.indianabcc.com)

### Family Series: Shepherding a Child's Heart

“*Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.*” (Proverbs 22:6)

For some, parenting their children can seem like going to war. The battles become behavior-centered—fought in the flesh and focused on getting the children in line. This type of parenting is very draining and leads to burn out.

The real battle in parenting is for the hearts of our children. Because our children are precious to God, He has a unique plan for their lives. Satan would love to destroy that plan. As parents, it is our mission to fight for our children, protect them, and assist them in finding the call of God on their lives—and then to affirm that call in them and send them out as ambassadors for Christ. This kind of parenting is a great blessing.

Biblical parenting accepts the God-given responsibility of disciplining our children. (Deut. 6) Our desire in the discipleship of our children is for them to:

1. Know God by believing and receiving His love for them (1 John 4:16)
2. Follow God by putting their trust in Him.
3. Glorify God by showing Him forth in every area of their lives, as opposed to compartmentalizing their lives.
4. Embrace wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. (Proverbs 4:7; 24:3-4)
5. Have the fear of God in their lives. (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10)

To truly impact our children's lives for God, we must nurture their hearts. Consider these aspects of developing a heart-focused, grace-based discipleship lifestyle with your children:

- Enjoy your children as individuals by taking joy in their unique existence and being glad to be with them. Give each of them the experience of being the beloved son or daughter.



- Love them unconditionally when they fail. This helps them experientially understand God's love for them.
- Meet their spiritual, emotional, and physical needs without them asking or causing them to feel guilty. Meeting your children's needs helps them learn to receive.
- Praise their unique characteristics (gifts, passions, godly desires, and godly character traits).
- Understand them when they are having emotional difficulties and help them return to joy.
- Motivate them with a loving attitude, encouraging their faith, bringing hope and reverence for God, and appealing to their conscience in discipline. Avoid fear tactics, anger, shame, or condemnation.
- Teach them about godly character through your own example, studying Scripture, reading good books, and learning about historical and modern-day leaders.
- Enjoy being together as a family on a regular basis. Being glad to be with your children is what brings them joy.

Parents, the power you have in your children's lives is tremendous. It is greater than any force in their lives except the power of the living God. That is why the Lord calls us to have our children's hearts. As we learn to disciple our children and affirm the work of God in their hearts, He will equip them in a mighty way to fulfill their God-given life purpose.

-Rev. Jeffrey Pokone



### IBCC Fall Praise Banquet

The 2010 Fall Praise Banquet is right around the corner! Join us for a special evening of celebrating God's work in the lives of people through this ministry.

Bill Hull, well-known pastor, author, and founder of *Choose the Life Ministries*, will be our guest speaker for the evening.

We hope to see you there!

**Date:** Friday, November 12

**Time:** 7:00pm

**Cost:** \$10/person

**Location:** Indianapolis Training Center  
2820 N. Meridian St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46208

**Contact the IBCC office at**  
**317-585-1845 or**  
**[office@indianabcc.com](mailto:office@indianabcc.com)**  
**by November 5**  
**to reserve a seat!**

This message entitled  
*Shepherding a Child's Heart*  
is available at

[www.indianabcc.com](http://www.indianabcc.com).

For more information on this subject, we invite you to download Rev. Pokone's [family\\_series.htm](#).

# Testimony: Embracing My True Identity



I came to the Lord when I was 4 years old. At that age I couldn't understand how a man's death and the shedding of his blood helped me to be right with God. I didn't understand it at all, but I believed it anyway. Yet believing God's remedy did not make it true. His remedy already was true simply because God said it. But my believing opened the door, giving me personal access. So I didn't **DO** anything to be

free from the penalty of sin. I simply entered in through believing that the work was **DONE**. Even though I didn't understand how it could be, at 4 years old I simply **believed** God that He had made it possible for me to be right with Him.

But at the very moment I became free from the penalty of sin, I also became free of its power over my performance. Yet I was not aware at that age that that my freedom from sin's power would not be meaningful in my life unless I entered into it through believing. There isn't anything that I can **DO** to be free from the power of sin. It's already been **DONE**. So I literally own this freedom from the power of sin, but I cannot have access to it unless I enter into it the same way—through simply believing what God has said.

Doing right must grow out of believing right. For this reason we need to be less focused on doing right, and more concerned about believing right. However, because we are naturally performance-driven, we tend to base our spiritual growth on the practical sections of scripture that tell us how to behave instead of first engrafting the doctrinal sections that tell us what to believe. There is a reason that the doctrinal sections come first. But even as we read and apply the practical sections, if the effort flows out of a preoccupation with our performance and not out of a Christ-focus, it is worth little. Our focus should be, singularly, looking into the face of the Lord Jesus Christ, believing what He says is true, and then believing that His life will energize our work. It is not possible to advance toward Christ while focusing on our performance. On the other hand it IS indeed possible to apply the practical sections of scripture through looking into the face of Jesus. But the process begins by believing what God says is true.

And what He says is that I am alive to Christ and dead to sin. It is completely true, and there is nothing I can do to make it more true. I can, however, make it more meaningful and productive by choosing to believe it. The more I reaffirm the truth, the more my behavior will begin to reflect it. So I need to exhort myself and others in the same manner that Paul exhorted the Romans: *“Don't you know that when you were baptized into Jesus Christ, you were baptized into His death. Don't you know that you have been united with Christ both in His death and resurrection? Don't you know that your old man is dead and that you have been raised in newness of life?”* I must continue this barrage until I am able to answer, *“Yes I do know—I am a new person in Christ, and by God's grace I will live accordingly.”*

I am now a little over 50 years old. I must truthfully say that there have been seasons in past months that I didn't even want to live anymore. I was discouraged, but I was learning that the answer was not in trying harder or just making myself do the right thing. I now understand that this situation existed not because I wasn't doing right, but because I wasn't believing right. The believing right must take the lead, because it is the only response that pleases God (Heb 11:6). For years I have acknowledged my “sainthood” in my mind without actually embracing it in my spirit. But one year ago I made a simple life-changing decision to believe that my true identity flows from Christ and not from my performance. I then began to daily embrace the truth that I am the righteousness of God in Christ declared into existence “out of nothing.”

Did it make any difference in my life? Let's just say that for 50 years I lived one way, and now I live another way simply because I am now believing what was true all along. The believing doesn't make it true for me, but it does make it productive and meaningful in my life.

But someone might come to me and say, “I saw you sin last week.” Unfortunately I wouldn't be a bit surprised. The difference is that now I know that the existence of sin has no effect on my identity. Before this watershed, the existence of sin would have devastated me because the identity that I embraced flowed from my performance. I now know that my true identity is not tied to my performance. Yet as I continue to embrace my true identity in Christ, my performance will naturally fall in line as if it were a fruit that naturally grows from a life-giving vine.

Guilt and fear are great motivators. Guilt focuses on the past and fear focuses on the future. Yet why should we motivate by guilt when *“There is therefore now no condemnation”* ? And how can we motivate by fear when *“God has not given us the spirit of fear”* ? God's method of motivating us to godliness is based on our present identity in Christ with all of its benefits. *“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. Beloved now are we the sons of God...And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure.”*

For many believers, the concept of being “in Christ” is simply a curious idea portrayed as a positional truth that will some day in the sweet by and by have a substantial bearing on our existence. But God would have us to embrace His words as being true right now. He wants us to embrace the truth in our spirit, not merely acknowledge it in our mind. I find then that whenever I begin to question the truth and value of the finished work of Christ in regard to my daily life, the ensuing struggle becomes a futile attempt at self-improvement framed around trying to become someone that I already am. That struggle is not necessary. I am right now the righteousness of God in Christ. God has finally brought me to the end of my resources so that I can discover His.

-A father from Michigan