



First Things First

by Penny Raine

The home schooling parents guide to leading family devotions

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Cover Photo by Penny Raine

Visit us on the web

www.pennyraine.com

www.pennyraine.com/blog

email-

penny@pennyraine.com Or pennyraine@gmail.com

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I can be contacted at penny@pennyraine.com.

May the Lord bless you and your families as you pursue a deeper relationship with Him.

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Forward by Miss Candace Davidson



I met Penny in person in the summer of 2006 in Primm Springs, TN where God had lead me to go and help with the "Above Rubies" ministry. It had been a very busy couple of days, as thousands of magazines had poured in. About seven of us in the office working as hard and fast as we could didn't seem to decrease the size of the monstrous stacks of magazines. Then, I remember dear Mrs. Nancy Campbell announcing in her enthusiastic New Zealand accent after she had answered a brief phone call, "The Raine family is coming to help! Oh Praise the Lord!"

I had communicated with Penny via an e-group for at least a year prior. I knew she loved Jesus from the heart I had come to know, but it was so exciting to be able to meet this woman of God and her precious children. Not long after Mrs. Campbell's official announcement, part of the lovely Raine family poured into the Above Rubies office, ready to dive into the masses of magazines to encourage women and families all over the world with God's vision for families. It's not as if they didn't have loads of things to do at home, but here they came, and this was not the first time. Penny hugged me like she'd known me all her life. She talked about Jesus and their jersey cow. Her daughters (even the younger ones) were quick to jump right in along with the rest of us, with their servants' hearts. They had been taught well. That was one of the busiest days of my life! When we decided to come to a stopping place, April, Penny's oldest daughter wanted to sing for us. We all settled in the family area of the office as she began to play her guitar. The Holy Spirit took over as she sang words from the heart of God. We were in all in awe of the anointing upon her. This was no practicing what you had learned at guitar or singing lessons. This was a heart passionately in love with Jesus. This was true worship.

Penny is the type of lady who doesn't take her incredibly high calling as a wife and mama lightly. She rejoices in those roles. She is "pleased to be a doormat for Jesus", which is one of my favorite quotes from her e-mail signature line. She knows it's not about her or anyone else, but it's all about Jesus. She has had her share of storms, but I've only known her to hold tightly to Jesus, trusting His plan with all her heart till the rain slacks. Her entire family has a heart for the lost and the hurting, and they do not hesitate to reach out to them in a loving, Biblical way. They have taken seriously Christ's command to share the Gospel and make disciples without compromising God's vision for families. They are such an inspiration to me. Penny is truly a 21st century Proverbs 31 woman.
Candace Davidson

Introduction



Who am I? My name is Penny Raine. I have been married since 1986 to my husband Jim, known Locally as "Jumpin Jim". He was given that name lovingly by the county jail inmates that he ministers to. The Lord has blessed us with 8 children as of this writing. Our son Levi joined Jesus eternally when he was nearly a year old in 2002. Later that same year I gave birth to a baby girl we named Mercy. The Lord had given us her name before Levi was born, when He told us he would give us another daughter. That promise sustained us through that difficult trial. His mercy is new every morning and always sustains. It was our intimate relationship with Him that allowed us to hear that promise He spoke to us.

Our oldest child has been leading worship since she was 13, and is now married with her own child on the way. Our next in line is also a worship leader and has ministered in many situations. All of our children have a deep relationship with the Lord and know how to pray, they have been involved in ministry all of their lives. But before they minister to others they minister to Jesus. He is worthy to be praised. Of all the things we have ever taught them, what I will show you here is the most important. This is what makes it all work.

I openly admit I am a great parent. Would you like to know why? I am a great parent now because I was an awful parent and sought the Lord for answers. When our first child was born I cried for days at the Lord's goodness. I grasped the revelation of the gift I had just been given. I knew that it was grace, that I could have never done anything good enough to deserve such a gift. I knew that I in myself was not worthy. I knew that He loved me, His love was made real in this gift I did not deserve. That turned my heart towards Him and told Him that I was honored and would raise my children for His kingdom. I was very immature in my relationship with the Lord and my husband was not even submitted to Jesus at the time. So it was a slow process learning to follow the Lord, a process we learned together. A process that after 20 years we are still learning. The things I have learned I am excited to share with you.

First Things First



So, you have the pens and pencils and 12 different types of curriculum. You have the dictionaries and reference books. But something is still missing.

How you start your day will set the tone for all that you learn.

Homeschoolers sacrifice a lot to gain what it is important to them. One thing of utmost importance is not having to adhere to a schedule set by someone else. We are able to set our schedules, schedules that work for our families.

The best way to start our day is with Jesus, worshiping Him, getting to know Him, then studying His word and how it applies to our lives.

But, sometimes parents don't feel qualified, or they don't feel they can teach God's word without a written step by step devotional, that is written by someone else. That is fine but isn't tailored to YOUR family.

The fact that you are a parent makes you qualified. And the Word says that anyone who lacks wisdom just needs to ask. If there is nothing you ever do as a parent but this one thing, teaching them how to love God, then you have still succeeded. Loving Jesus is what makes life work, everything else is secondary.

What I will show you here are tried and true methods of family devotions. You don't need to be a preacher or a theologian; all you need to be is willing!

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 upon 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.
Deuteronomy 6:5-7 NIV ©Zondervan

“Jesus Time”



The word tells us to seek first His Kingdom for two reasons. What you do first is done with more gusto, more energy, and more enthusiasm. And secondly because it is an example of putting Him before us. There are many references to early morning in scripture. When it is at all possible our “Jesus time” should be early morning, or whenever our day begins. What is early to one is late to another so time isn’t as important as priority.

Some Early Morning references-

Abraham rose early in the morning to take Isaac to the altar. [Gen 22:3](#)

The Lord told Moses to rise early in the morning to go before Pharaoh. [Exo 8:20](#), [Exo 9:13](#)

After writing the words of the Lord, Moses rose early to build an altar to the Lord. [Exo 24:4](#)

Joshua crossed the River Jordan early in the morning. [Jos 3:1](#)

The priests took up the ark of the Lord early in the morning. [Jos 6:12](#)

Joshua numbered the people early in the morning. [Jos 8:10](#)

The Kingdom of heaven is like a man who went out early in the morning to hire laborers. [Mat 20:1](#)

It was early in the morning that the tomb of Jesus was discovered open. [Mar 16:2](#)

The people came early in the morning to hear Jesus speak in the temple. [Luk 21:38](#)

What is Jesus time? It is a time of day given to Him. A time when we come together and give honor to Him. He must be first. Praying for others, studying His word and serving one another are all good things but they come second. He is first. He desires our “first fruits”, the best we have to offer.

How do we learn to honor Jesus? Worship. Worship literally means to make ourselves low and small and to recognize His bigness. It does not mean to sing about Heaven, or to talk about witnessing to others. Worship is telling Him what you think of Him. Telling Him how great He is and how much you love Him.

This is a simple pattern the Lord gave me to guide my "Jesus time".

Praise Him for all He has done and is.

Repent for the things I have done so that I can be closer to Him.

Ask for the things I desire of Him, prayer requests for others.

Your will be done Lord.

This can be a starting point for your time with Him.

Our own personal time with the Lord is more important than anything we do here on earth. But what good is it if we can't teach it to our children?

The Morning Meeting



Back when our children were very little we started what we call our morning meeting. We gather together and each gives an offering to the Lord. A great start is to each sing a song to the Lord. Even very small children can do this. We personally have not taught our children Sunday School songs because so many of them seem so silly and unmeaning. If you choose to use them, try to choose ones that actually exalt the Lord. Children are small innocent people but the Holy Spirit inside of them is just as big as in adults. They don't need silliness. Our relationship with the Lord is joyful but serious. We have preferred to teach them small bits from Psalms, and have them sing them to the Lord. Often times they will actually make up their own songs that are straight from their hearts. As long as it is from their heart to the Lord and is scripturally sound we encourage it. At one time for weeks on end one of our daughters who was about 3 at the time would sing everyday, "He is happy, He is happy". That was her offering unto the Lord. I have no doubt that it made him happy.

Another offering that can be made is to bring a scripture. This is one of the best ways to get your beginning readers reading. Everyone has a bible in front of them, and the older ones help the younger ones find a scripture to read to everyone. Even before they start reading they can memorize. When our Hannah was 5 she memorized all of Psalms 121 one verse at a time. She would repeat it at our morning meeting every day adding one more verse. Then she would sing it. That was many years ago but we all still remember it. Singing scripture is a great way to get God's Word **inside** of you.

Another thing we do at our morning meetings is discuss dreams. Daddy asks each child if they had one and we discuss what it might mean. We believe the Lord gives us answers to our questions if we ask Him. Often children have dreams with meanings. If they have bad dreams it is time for the parents to consider what has been put before their children's eyes. A good prayer at bedtime is to quote Psalms 4:8, " I will lie down and sleep in peace for you O Lord make me dwell in safety."

After our morning meeting time became well established, we began to add some teaching time. Jim would bring something that applied to what was going on with us, or ministered to a problem someone was having. Sometimes we would go through a particular book of the Bible or study a topic. Below are some suggestions for detailed study. Don't make it complicated. The idea is to get everyone involved. You don't have to have a degree in Theology to teach your children God's word.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. 1Corinthians 2:10-13 NIV ©Zondervan

Some topics and scriptures that can be easily studied as a family.

- Psalms 23
- The Beatitudes --- **Matthew 5:1-16**
- The Lord's Prayer --- **Matthew 6:9-13**
- The Plan of Salvation by the Roman's Road
Romans 1:20-21, Romans 3:23, Romans 5:8, Romans 6:23, Romans 10:9-10, Romans 10:13, Romans 11:36,

As your children mature in their walk with the Lord they can also bring revelations and understandings that God has recently shared with them. The whole idea is to bring to the meeting what the Lord gives everyone individually. But the first step is to learn to meet with Him individually, and the morning meeting time teaches them that, so it all goes hand in hand.

After teaching/sharing time, needs can be discussed. We can remind each other of needs that need to be prayed for throughout the day. As I have been writing this my husband and children have been praying for me to have His words as I write. We pray all day around here, and pray while we are doing chores or working on our farm, but it does not take the place of our "Jesus time". There has to be a place in the day that is His and His alone, not shared, not interrupted.

We all pray together several times a day. At meal times, before bedtime, before we go anywhere in the car. Often it will be the youngest that asks the Lord to bless us, little people need to be able to pray out loud and their honesty is touching.

If you as a parent can light the fire of worship and prayer within your children, Jesus will make sure it grows. It is a gift that will last their entire life and a legacy that will be passed down for generations to come.

Bonus Pages

Psalms 23



The Beatitudes ~ ~ **Matthew 5:1-16**



The Lord's Prayer ~ ~ **Matthew 6:9-13**



The Plan of Salvation via the Roman Road



Psalms 23



The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

The Beatitudes ~ ~ **Matthew 5:1-16**



And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

The Lord's Prayer ~ ~ **Matthew 6 :9-13**



After this manner therefore pray ye:

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

The Plan of Salvation via the Roman Road



Roman's 1:20 -- There is no excuse for not recognizing God.

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

Romans 3:23 -- None of us are "good".

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Romans 5:8 – He accepts us in our mess.

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Roman's 6:23 – We can choose, but we cannot ignore.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 10:9-10 – Admit your mistakes, accept Him, and announce it!

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Romans 10:13 – If you have a heart for Him, He saves.

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Romans 11:36 – Give Him Glory!

For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen

Blessing from me to you



"The LORD bless you
and keep you;
the LORD make his face shine
upon you
and be gracious to you;
the LORD turn his face toward
you
and give you peace."

(Numbers 6:24-26)

This is a blessing from me to you for your family,
it can be found in Numbers 6:24-26 NIV ©Zondervan

