

## Permissive Parents

Children can influence their parents just as parents can influence their children. The following story about an imaginary couple may have been duplicated in the lives of many of our readers.

George and Mary were a wonderful couple as they began their life together. Throughout their youth they had received strong teaching concerning worldliness, and their conduct showed the effects of that teaching.

They had been taught faithfulness in attendance, and they never missed a service for "anything." In character and conviction, they were blameless.

This young couple failed, however, to instill into the hearts of their children these same convictions. Consequently, as the children reached their teens, they began to put pressure on their parents to let them do what all the other young people were doing. Gradually the will of the parents was broken down, and they began to permit their children to do things they never dreamed their children would do.

Rationalization came easy for George and Mary. "After all, the Bible is not specific in these matters," they thought. "The Bible says 'modest apparel,' but it doesn't define modesty." "And, they're only planning to go to the dance; they aren't planning to dance." "We can't say 'no' to everything," they said. When Junior began to show unusual athletic ability, the question of attending services became a problem. At first they took Junior out of games and brought him to midweek services, but then the team began to depend more and more on him. The play-offs came, and the team's only hope in the play-offs was for Junior to play. George and Mary gave in. And once they had given in, they had no more argument for the future. Junior never missed another game to "go to church."

George and Mary often found themselves on the defensive in Bible classes. They began to argue for their children's behavior. And, the more accustomed they became to their children's actions, the more innocent their actions seemed to be. Eventually, their own conduct became affected. They reached the point where they thought nothing of missing on Friday night during a meeting to see Junior play ball. Mary even adopted some of the daughter's dress habits, although remaining sufficiently "discreet" to stay in the good graces of the brethren. Yes, George and Mary are still in good standing in the church, and their change has been so gradual that many fail to realize that they are not the strong Christians they formerly were. What happened to George and Mary? Instead of bringing their children "up" in the nurture and

admonition of the "Lord," their children brought them "down" in the nurture and admonition of the "devil."

Our children may do wrong, but they must not do wrong with our permission! We do not seek anger, but repentance. Parents, would your names fit in the place of "George" and "Mary" in the above story?

Bill Hall