

# A Parent's Greatest Joy



By Dennis Gundersen

**M**any of you who know my wife Naomi and I, and have met us at home education conventions, are aware that we have four sons. Two are now college graduates; the third is currently studying at a Christian university; the fourth is in his final year of homeschooling. We are truly at a joyful time of beholding God's blessing in our lives, seeing our sons becoming what we always longed for them to become: men of character, men of zeal for righteousness and serving the Lord, men equipped with so much more than I ever had at their age!

What we feel, as we see our sons advancing in righteousness, could not be better said than the Apostle John puts it: "I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth" (3 John 4).

I believe it was Norm Wakefield (another frequent home education convention speaker) whom I first heard say that, when my children are mar-

ried, I really doubt that one of their spouses will ever approach me, greatly moved in heart with deep gratitude to us, for so diligently teaching our dear sons how to diagram a sentence. Do you think so? It doesn't strike me as likely. Nor am I holding my breath waiting for a young wife to one day tell us, with tears in her eyes, how it's made all the difference in their home that we made our boys press on through their studies in trigonometry.

But I do think this likely: it's not at all improbable that a day will come when a grateful wife will thank us profusely for having focused on character-building! Now we didn't do it so we could revel in that "one shining moment"; we don't live for that, but for the smile of God on our life and labor, not the smile or praise of men. But does not this truth bring vividly to our attention, where a parent's highest joy truly lies? I hope to inspire you to passionately seek that which will bring you one of the best blessings

you can enjoy on earth: children in hot pursuit of righteousness.

"The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, and he who begets a wise son will be glad in him. Let your father and mother be glad, and let her rejoice who gave birth to you. Give me your heart, my son, and let your heart delight in my ways!"

Proverbs 23:24-26

By "a wise son", this Proverb does not mean a good boy or an intelligent son, or one who merely makes out well in the world or who becomes a person of skill. For surely we know that a nation full of highly skilled, competent, and successful people who are not good and faithful can be a monstrosity. Rather, the exalted joy of the parents of the righteous is rooted in children who pursue the ways of godly wisdom and who share the parents' delight in serving Christ first.