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Forever Deprived?

Some years ago children were privileged to have the mother at home to keep the home, to cook, to teach the common everyday realities of life and to offer various unsaid protections children would need. The generation which grew with such a sensitive attention stands out today from the present which unfortunately has had to give up both the parents to work outside the home. May be you are one such underprivileged child forced to push yourself to 'take care' of yourself. So do your parents who have idolised work and have lost the joy of being there for you when you needed them. Yet, you look happy, dress well and laugh aloud on the outside.

You are not a born-expert on handling such deprivations. You may ventilate the related frustrations at the wrong places or even at the wrong timings in the wrong ways. As I encouraged a few children who have both the parents in a job, to share their hearts, these were their painfully, yet respectfully, expressed grievances—

□ “They are tired when I am ready to share the news of my day. I’m not sure if they’re listening to me at all. They get angry when I demand a listening ear. They don’t do justice to me and my sister by not knowing exactly how to handle us respecting our individualities. They compare me with my sister though they know they shouldn’t. I’m trying to say that they forget parenting principles because they are too drained for it. We become their job, stress, fatigue, frustration-bins. For no fault of ours, we get hurt.”

□ Another thoughtful girl says, “Momy cooks hurried, less tasty dishes. We hate it. Life’s little joys of having my hair combed, being fed and being taken out for shopping are denied. No personal-touch helps. I do not want my children to ache with this deprivation and so I’ve decided not to take up a job. I got everything I asked for but did not have my parents, sometimes even when I was in desperateness. I was forced to shoulder the mother-role even when I was a little girl. It never became better.”

□ A boy cried, “I get to see my parents together at home only once a week because my dad is gone when I wake up and comes back from work when I’ve already gone to bed.”

Well, within this scenario it can be not too difficult to shift the blame on to your parents singing, “It’s because mummy works outside.” Adam and Eve played the blame-game at the garden (Gen 3:12,13). Can you move on with life so, untouched? It’s time you learn to protect yourself with the God-given responsibility that no one else can be fully responsible for what you have grown up to be. Everyone is responsible for himself. “A man’s own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against God” (Prov 19:3).

With the situation of the absence of both parents during a major part of the day, you need to pick up your courage to guard yourselves with an understanding that it is possible to grow up into a responsible adult without allowing the crowding circumstances to harm you. You can learn and teach yourself to look at home situations from a Christian perspective when the ideal is missing.

When you suffer the deficit of both the parents, your world of emotions, physique and spirituality gets diseased. It gets sick. Your Creator sends the message that you don't have to live so. He gives the HOPE that you can fight it with THE GREAT PHYSICIAN by your side and bring healing to the rest of the body, i.e. the family as well. This can be an interesting yet painfully demanding challenge.

The emotional world of such children is normally predicted to be dangerously vulnerable. There could be anger towards the parents, God and even yourself. There is a deep hurt which follows the strong feelings of neglect and rejection. Loneliness. False guilt from the belief that it might be your fault. Anxiety because of pressuring responsibilities. Insecurity as you receive minimal support from the authority figures. Insecurity breeds fear. Stress and a low self-esteem go along with a long list of unsaid emotions. An inferiority complex because the parents are not there to show and build up your true potential selves.

What can you do with this pile — when parents are not willing to set apart the time to do anything about it? You should acknowledge the truth that you are hurt without denying that your parents are being a major cause factor. Try then to point at a dominant emotion that's bothering you, like anger or hate. Deal with that emotion.

You can do this by finding out the belief behind it. Remove the wrong belief and replace it with the truth. Do this with all your negative emotions in their descending priorities. You can seek the help of a friend in whom you can confide. If you further take a deeper look into yourself you'll find unforgiveness taking root. Now, this is said to be an unhealthy unseen bond between you and your parents. Only when you release forgiveness to them from your heart with the verbal confession of it to your parents that you forgive them, you'll experience the joy of forgiveness and freedom. We are challenged to get rid of every kind of wrong attitudes and bitter roots (Eph 4:31,32). Forgive them with a good understanding of why you are forgiving them and acknowledge that it sometimes does take the earnings of both the parents to give their children a good education and a decent living. Try to understand why your mother needs to work. The pressures from her society, financial strain, pressure from your dad and her in-laws are some of the reasons for which she cannot be entirely blamed.

A suppression or an allowing of these emotions to sediment can lead to various psychological problems such as depression and other emotional disorders, TV addictions, drug addictions, etc. This will also affect the other areas of your life if you leave them undealt. Striving to handle the situation all by yourself can also lead to problems like masturbation, homosexuality and lesbianism.

How can you protect yourself physically? When you are left alone with all these feelings you naturally crave for love and attention from whichever direction it may come. Whether genuine or false, it might be difficult to discern at that juncture. Be safely sceptical about encouraging such relationships and draw a strong

boundary around you at a good distance. The feelings of acceptance and love you might receive here are very questionable. They usually come from relatives, cousins or from unexpected sources who can see through you your vulnerability which you yourself cannot see. Take an effort not to take them into overconfidence about any need of yours and NEVER EVER allow them the “uncomfortable touches.” It begins here. You wouldn't be sinning if you can politely and firmly tell them to visit you when the parents are at home. You are permitted to answer them through the closed door. Let 1 Peter 5:8,9 and James 4:7 be your guiding pointers.

If you've already been a victim of abuse or rape, don't hesitate to inform your parents. Fear of breaking close knit family relationships should not come in the way. Call for help!

Encourage yourself to be engaged in reading good books, developing your field of interest, building relationships with siblings, visiting or inviting friends home for tea, or even doing little things at home to make your parents feel welcome when they get back. Prepare to communicate something appreciative of them. You can decide to write a nice letter to one of your friends everyday.

The other side of the physical is to keep yourself clean and brisk all the time. Exercise, wash up, comb your hair, put on some gentle make-up and dress smartly. Try it and you'll find yourself feeling good about yourself.

Can you claim and exercise spiritual protection? Remember and be assured that the Word of God, the Holy Spirit and the Blood of Jesus Christ promise you a divine

protection. It yet should not be taken for granted. Keep claiming it everyday and as often as the need arises. Soak yourself and fill your mind and heart with the Word so the Holy Spirit will remind you in time. Pray for every detail of your life. Your prayer life can be exciting and your prayer closet the safest place for ventilation. With this equipping, practise the truths in yourself. Share the learning to your friends, neighbours and the others who are involved in your life. Constantly train your perspective to be in line with God's.

Admitting and exercising the responsibility that God has entrusted to you over yourself, you need to remember that there is another side to that responsibility. God wants you to communicate to your parents, with all respect, the failures in their responsibility over you. You will be ministering to your parents, thus. Talk to them with prayer and tell them openly how painful it is. Give them your support to change. Tell them your expectations of them.

To protect yourself in isolation can be stressful and, sometimes, failing. Ask God to give you a friend with whom you can be yourself and receive help and counsel. You can both regularly meet to share about each other's lives and for strengthening in prayer and encouragement. The hidden danger is to believe that 'Everything is OK. Nothing is wrong.' Truths hurt, but if it's handled constructively, you, your home and your family can experience joy, peace, gladness, togetherness and freedom. You could become a home others envy! Your mourning can turn to dancing!