

Interview with author Betty Weinberger

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Betty Weinberger

Many, many moons ago, I had the privilege of getting to know the Weinberger family. As a teenager, I occasionally would babysit their boys during one of the meetings at their home, or while David and Betty went on a prayer walk together. There was something "different" about their family that really drew me to them! As I grew older, I began to see Betty as a mentor, and I have been so grateful for her input in my life.

I am thrilled that she has written a book now articulating some of the ways the Lord led them in their journey to raise their sons to be godly men. As they say, the proof is in the pudding! Their sons are now all grown up, walking with the Lord, bearing good fruit in their lives, and still enjoying fellowship with their parents - without ever having gone through any "rebellious" stages throughout their adolescence. I am always eager to hear from parents in that position!

Betty personifies the "meek and quiet spirit" that the Lord admonished us as women to display. I hope you will enjoy getting to know her as she shares from her heart with us. Please scroll down to see how you can enter to win a copy of her book, *Enjoying Your Children*. Also, if you would like to hear more from Betty, you can read some of her articles [here](#).

David and Betty Weinberger with their sons Lael and Joel.

Lael is in a courtship with Sarah, pictured to the left.

Betty, could you start by telling us a little bit about your family?

My name is Betty Weinberger. Dave and I got married when we were 35 and 36, and when someone gets married that late in life, it's a real privilege to be blessed with two children. So right from the start our joy was so great when we had Lael, who is now 22 and Joel, who is 19.

Dave works at Governors State University as the Assistant Director of the Financial Aid Office, and is in his 32nd year there. He also works as a lay pastor at our Messianic Jewish congregation, Messianic House of Prayer. He was sent out as an elder to the South Suburbs from our supervising congregation, Temple Shalom Yisrael in Rolling Meadows, IL about 17 years ago. We are a congregation of Jews and Gentiles who worship the Lord together and gather each week for a Sabbath service. We also celebrate the Feasts of the Lord such as Passover, Feast of Trumpets, etc. We believe all believers are grafted into the olive tree of Israel and the feasts are for all of us. They all point to Jesus (Yeshua in Hebrew).

What are some of your fondest memories with your children?

That's a hard one, because I have so many memories, and I so enjoyed every age our sons were. I really loved homeschooling because I got to be with my sons all day long. I particularly treasure some of our times reading together after lunch. We would get into such interesting and inspiring conversations after reading different chapters in true stories about people like George Washington Carver or Gladys Aylward. We read some of our favorite books two or three times. We just enjoyed talking so much about things in life that these books brought to mind. Through times like these, our sons became our best friends.

I also love to recall the joy of celebrating Hanukkah each year and singing the songs and getting gifts ready and seeing Lael and Joel making gifts for each person for each of the 8 nights! And the fun and productive, rewarding times we had working on the homeschool science and history fair projects each year.

What have you found most challenging about motherhood, and how have you handled this challenge?

When our sons were young, the most challenging thing for me was to not let other people's comments bother me. At the very start of their lives, people started giving us advice about leaving them in their rooms to cry and not "spoiling" them by picking them up and so on. We, however, believed crying is important and one of the main ways a baby can communicate his/her needs. So we wanted to meet these needs and respond to their cries and take care of them and pick them up or nurse them. Our hearts led us to develop this gentle style of parenting. But I used to feel so afraid that if Lael or Joel cried or were too needy in front of others, then we would be looked down upon and judged for doing things all wrong. We couldn't be sure our approach was the right one, but it was the only method God gave us peace about using. And through the years, we saw the excellent results. All the care and time we sowed into our children eventually brought a harvest of care and blessings that they poured upon us. We all worked our way into each other's hearts and the lessons we taught our boys stuck with them, because it was from the heart.

As our children got older, I learned how to handle this big challenge of other people's opinions. I (we) never shared personal struggles we were going through (car seat problems, etc.) with anybody we thought did not share our gentle parenting approach (which very much limited us to not sharing with many

people). Dave and I grew closer to each other and to our children as we both (Dave and I) became each other's closest confidant.

What are some ways you are/were able, as a mother with small children, to spend time with the Lord?

This was a major struggle, but because I was so used to spending time with the Lord before our sons were born, I had to persevere and keep trying. My life was just not complete or fulfilling without it.

So once I happened on a scripture, Psalm 5, where it said, "morning by morning I lay my requests before You and wait in expectation." I had an idea. I'd write out my prayer requests on index cards and lay them out before the Lord on my really busy days (most days) and He would understand even if I didn't have time to say much about them except thanking Him for being there for me and acknowledging how much I needed Him. My requests of course were for each member of our family first, then our extended family and those who needed salvation and healing, and a card for America and a card for Israel. Later, when Lael and Joel were a little older, they enjoyed praying with me this way too and we all made prayer request cards together. I did read some of the Bible each day too. And while I nursed or before I nodded off to sleep, I'd talk to the Lord. I think that the Lord knows when we in our hearts want to spend time with Him and He meets us somehow, somewhere each day.

What's your favorite book or verse of the Bible and why?

I really like to read the Bible systematically each day, some from the Old Testament and some from the New and see how God answers our questions through each phase of life from passages that we might "just happen" to be on then.

But one of my favorite verses is Titus 2:4, that the older women should teach the younger women "to

be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children." I really like the emphasis that the most important thing to teach younger women is not how to have an outside ministry or how to pray more effectively, but to love their husbands and children, because this is the main job that we as women have and this is what God wants us to excel in.

What book or resource has helped you the most as a mother? (besides the Word of God)

Besides the Bible, a book that Dave and I really liked was Dr. William Sears' book, *Christian Parenting and Child Care*. I just read sections here and there, but some of those chapters on "the high need baby alias the fussy child" really encouraged me. He coined the term for the parenting style we naturally fell into, calling it "attachment parenting." He explained that high need babies, (many of whom are very intelligent and their brains are going all the time so that they have a hard time tuning things out and going to sleep) are a real privilege to have. Dr. Sears gave one section on what he thinks God would say to a mother of one of these high need babies. I read it and cried:

"When you were so tired that you thought you could not cope with your fussy baby another minute, I watched you. I was with you and you coped...When you asked 'Lord, why have You given me such a difficult child when my friends have such easy babies?' I said, 'Trust in Me with all your heart...' When you prayed, thanking Me for a gifted child, I replied, 'To whom much has been given, much is expected...' When you listened to your baby's nighttime needs, you pleaded, 'Lord, I'm exhausted; if only I could get one full night's sleep I could go on.' I heard your plea. I was awake with you. I gave you strength and you went on. When you doubted your worth as a person, I listened. You and your child are precious in My sight. I reminded you that you are doing the most important job in the world, raising My child whom I have given you on short term loan to nurture and return to Me. You have trained your child in the way he should go, and he has gone the way he should go. Come into My kingdom for I have reserved a special place for you."

How did you come to the decision to homeschool your boys?

Before I was married, I was a teacher. I really disliked the classroom situation and before I was married I read a book about homeschooling by some of the early pioneers in the movement. I really liked the concept of parents teaching their own children.

I didn't remember much about the book several years later when I was married with children of my own, but with the "attachment" parenting we were doing, neither Dave nor I could envision sending our

children to someone else to teach. When Lael was 5 someone told us about a homeschool group meeting nearby and so we attended. We heard 2 important things at that first meeting. The reason to homeschool is not academics, it's to raise up a Godly seed and give your child Godly character. We agreed and were encouraged to go on in this direction. The other thing was that at that time Illinois law required a child to be at school starting at age 8. That gave me a great feeling of relief. I could start teaching Lael the alphabet and reading and so on, and have no pressure on me at all, because he wasn't even required to be at school till age 8. That freed me up to begin homeschooling with joy and without any stress.

Could you pass on a tidbit of wisdom to other homeschool mothers in regards to what you feel is most important in curriculum choice? Or what method of education you feel is most effective for training children's minds and hearts?

It's very important to pay attention to your children's needs. If a curriculum is so hard it brings them to tears, it's time to change. If it's so boring that it just becomes busy work, it's time to change. We really only used a math curriculum. The other subjects were done with a variety of resources. We used a lot of biographies for history for the first 4 grades. Textbooks seemed to make history too dull and not come alive.

For reading, the curriculums didn't work too well for us, so I started out by making my own books for Lael to read and later for Joel. Then we found some phonics workbooks that worked. So we basically used a combination of writing some stories of our own, using some workbooks, and finding miscellaneous books for our boys to read with the type of words and sounds they knew.

But one very important thing is to keep reading out loud to your children even after they know how to read on their own. Read and talk. Talk to them a lot and share from your heart.

In order to keep your children's hearts, share with them your reasons for homeschooling and so on. When they are older, take them along to conferences, play them tapes of homeschool speakers from the conferences (we listened to the great talks over and over again), so they get the same vision you have for homeschooling, for learning Godly history, for courtship, for all those topics that come up at homeschool conferences.

So many families we saw did not have their children's hearts; the vision was not shared, the children didn't get it, and they did not carry it on when they grew up.

Looking back, is there anything you have learned since the time your children were small that you would pass on to younger mothers in regard to prioritizing marriage, housework, child training, etc. that made or could have made that season most enjoyable?

Yes, housework is not a priority. It is important to have your house neat and livable. I majored on keeping the kitchen and bathroom neat (not spotless) and the living room straightened up at least once a day or every two days. Also, I tried to keep the bedroom neat. (We all shared the same bedroom when our sons were very young.) But some days the house was a mess and that was OK. The big priority is to spend time with your children.

When your husband comes home from work, it's nice to enlist his help with the children and share with him your joys and struggles of the day and all the kind and interesting and fun and funny things your children did and said, so he is motivated too. Remember, he has a less intense bond with the children since he's not with them all day, so you have to help him. You have to talk to the children about him: "When Daddy comes home, maybe he can show you how he ... or he can play cowboys with you or..." They can really look forward to Daddy coming home and it will make Daddy feel special and loved and he'll want to spend time with the children. The more Dave reached out to our children, the more my love for Dave grew too.

Another hint I already touched upon, is don't share your struggles with too many other people. Save them to share when you and your husband are alone and you can figure things out the best for your particular situation and family. And it will keep you and your husband as best friends.

That is really good. Please share with us more on marriage. Could you pass on some godly advice to younger women on some practical ways to encourage your husband?

I would say that if you want to encourage your husband, tell him he's doing a great job and great things for the family. Encourage him a lot when he plays and interacts with the children. Tell him all the nice things they say about him during the day. You will have to talk to your children about Daddy a lot during the day and then they will also talk about him and anticipate his coming home. Tell your husband how you see your son's face light up when he gets home. Sometimes he might not be aware of how important he is to the children, and he is coming home from a day at work and is tired and coming from a totally different atmosphere, a whole other world, so to speak. So it's nice to mix the beginning conversations with how your day was with the children with questions about how his day was. Help him make the transition.

Also, the more you can encourage your children to bless him, the more he will be encouraged. They will be excited to do surprise things with you for Daddy like "Let's polish Daddy's shoes," or "Let's make Daddy's favorite dessert," and then they will also be anticipating showing these surprises to Daddy.

Another important role for your husband is to be the high priest of your home. So if one of the children is sick and someone must stay home from the weekly congregational meeting, it should be the mother staying home and the husband going to the service. Encourage your husband that you really need him to go and represent your family and come back and tell you about it. Tell him how happy you are when he does this.

Tell him how much you appreciate his going to work and getting up early each day faithfully (even he loses a lot of sleep when the babies are young).

Could you break down what you believe submission within a marriage looks like in day to day interaction?

I usually pray that I would submit to Dave wholeheartedly. I also pray that we will both submit one to another and respect each other's domains and each make it easy for the other. So the first and most important principle is to pray. Pray each day for your husband, your marriage. Pray specifically for specific situations you are working on.

Since the Bible tells us to submit one to another, I believe it is very important for the wife to share her thoughts and opinions with her husband (otherwise, how would he know what her preferences are so he can submit to them if he needs to).

If husband and wife both have different views even after talking thoroughly about some matter, the husband has to make the final decision. And the wife has to trust in the Lord that He is leading her husband and will do the best for the family. The wife should keep praying and if, after a time, her opinion is still strongly different and she feels it's important to bring it up again, she should do so in as nice a way as possible.

One good way to get your point understood and communicate very effectively is to make an analogy so the other person understands how important it is to you. For example, if your husband doesn't understand how something in the house bothers you a lot, you can compare it with something that bothers him a lot, either in the car or in the garage or his work place. If he can relate more of how you feel about something with how he feels about something, he can understand so much more. The better your communication, the more you know that he understands your point of view and that you did your job to get it across and now he has all the information he needs to make the final decision. And it's so much easier to submit from your heart when you know you had input and you are both working together, instead of trying to obey like a robot and try to squash your own feelings (eventually, they will resurface). Also, pray together on these important issues.

Another important thing is timing. Try to talk about important things at a time when it's not the most stressful time of the day, like don't do it right before your husband leaves for work or right before dinner. Dave never liked to talk about heavy issues at dinner and that was a good plan. Of course things don't always work out perfectly and sometimes big issues come up and can't be avoided at the most busy and hectic times. Oh well. That's when you have to immediately set new priorities in your mind, like "I guess it doesn't matter if we get there on time...or if we even get there." The best way to avoid having these heavy discussions at times of high stress is to make sure you bring up the topic sooner rather than later. Don't sweep important issues under the rug, they are liable to come up at inopportune times.

I hear of many young wives struggling with wanting their husbands to be the leaders of the home and not knowing how to let them lead and encourage them to lead, especially if they are not very assertive. Do you have some wisdom to share with younger women on how to handle this scenario?

Sometimes you just have to be quiet and wait for your husband to make a decision.

Also, let me re-emphasize how important good communication is. If you share with your husband how much you need his help, especially in specific situations, and you tell him ideas of what he can do to help you, that should help. I really needed Dave's help when our sons were small and we had company. If the adult conversation went on too long, our sons needed some attention in order to stay sociable and for me to be able to get the dinner ready or dishes cleaned up. So I suggested to Dave that he actually pull away from the conversation at times and go in the basement to play with the children for a while. I was OK with making dinner or cleaning up and talking to guests at the same time, so I really appreciated when Dave took the initiative to do something with the children. Often, I'd have to remind him, since I was more aware of the children's behavior or mood and sensed when this was needed. Also, he was able to carry on with the guests when I had to retreat upstairs with the children for bed time. I told him how much I needed him to help me and protect me and he was very happy to do this.

Some husbands might not know what to do and need the wife's ideas, especially regarding the

children, because she knows them so much more. It might not sound like leadership, what I just talked about, because the wife is asking for help and suggesting what the husband can do. But it shows the husband how she needs him and gives him a sense of his importance and his role as a father and the more he gets positive strokes when he does this, the more he will know how to do it and grow in confidence and lead in helping his family, both at home and outside the home.

Sometimes when visiting others it gets quite late for the wife and children and the wife can tell the husband in advance that she really needs his help to politely break away and leave at a reasonable time. Dave did this for us and I was always so grateful. If your husband knows how much you need him to do this for you, it will help to motivate him so much to do it.

NOW, ABOUT YOUR BOOK

Have you always enjoyed writing?

Yes, but when I became born again, I kind of gave it up until I had a real purpose to write for. One of the first things I wrote, then, after more than 10 years of being a believer, was my testimony booklet, [From Pierogi to Soybeans to Matzah Balls](#). I was writing bits and pieces of my testimony to many different people in letters, as a witness to them of how New Age things are dangerous, etc., that I thought I might as well write my whole testimony, and then I'll have it to give to whoever needs it instead of writing a bunch of individual letters.

How did you find time to write with children at home, homeschooling, and all of your other responsibilities?

I just wrote a little at a time. And my sons were already about 9 and 12 when I began writing *Enjoying Your Children*. It took 2 or 3 years. I didn't treat it as a full-time work, only as a fun activity if I had a free half hour here or there.

Please tell us a little bit about Enjoying Your Children – what gave you the idea for it, the basic premise in a nutshell and how it all came together.

Remember how I said that one of my biggest challenges in being a new mother was getting contrary advice from so many well-meaning people? Since I knew how much someone's judgmental attitude could hurt, especially to an exhausted mother, I didn't want to be a person who did this to someone else. Yet at the same time, I so much wanted to help other parents whom I saw that needed help and advice. I was so sad when I saw children ignored, or parents not enjoying their children, or harshness spoiling the atmosphere of a home, but I didn't want to say anything directly if I wasn't asked. Yet my heart was so heavy in wanting to help. So that's when God laid it on my heart to write a book and share the joy that is possible in parenting, if we strive to do it with the principles God laid out in the Bible.

Also, I was disappointed that there were relatively few Christian books that advocated gentle parenting. The fruits of the spirit, including gentleness, were advocated in Bible studies for relating to others, it seemed, but not to our own children. Making sacrifices for others was always a popular teaching, but not for our own children. So much material was out there saying that you need to draw the line, discipline consistently, not let your children walk all over you, make them fit into your schedule rather than you making sacrifices for them, etc. There was the concept of "tough love", but not much about raising children with a gentle approach. When people hear about gentle parenting, they often think it means "anything goes". We wanted to write a book that talked about the principle of being gentle and understanding, while at the same time showing it doesn't mean that "anything goes". It's a very time-consuming venture, but oh so rewarding. You have to be very observant of your children and be with them most of the time so you are able to correct gently before a situation gets out of hand. You have to talk with your children throughout the day and you really enjoy and treasure each other's company and you become each other's best friends.

One of the things that I really got "turned onto" after reading your books was the whole concept of celebrating biblical feasts. Could you share with us a little bit about what that is and why it is both important and exciting?

Dave is Jewish by birth and I (Betty) am Jewish by rebirth, realizing that since I became a believer I've been grafted into the rich olive tree of Israel. We are raising Messianic Jewish children and part of our vision is to show that you don't have to give up being Jewish to believe in Jesus and to show that believing in Jesus is a very Jewish thing to do. So celebrating the Feasts and being part of a Messianic Jewish congregation were very important to us in our family. All the Feasts point to Jesus, either to an event in His life that was fulfilled or to an event that is still to come and still to be fulfilled (His return and the Feast of Trumpets, for example).

We believe that God made all of us in His own image and part of our make-up comes with a desire to celebrate. So either we celebrate events we think up ourselves (birthdays, Mother's Day, Sweetest Day, etc.), or we celebrate days God ordained for us to celebrate: the feasts of the Lord from Leviticus 23. They are not required for salvation, but they are to be celebrated forever, throughout all our generations, and what joy there is to celebrate these days. They are labeled the Feasts of the Lord, so they are for all the Lord's people, Jew and Gentile alike, both grafted back into the olive tree of Israel.

One whole chapter of the book recounts our family's experiences celebrating these different feasts through the years, and it's meant to give families ideas of how they can celebrate these feasts too.

Is there anything else you would like to share with other mothers?

Most importantly, I would like to tell the people who read the interview that the most important thing to do for their children is to pray. Pray every day. Even if they don't get time to pray for a whole bunch of things, pray every day for their husband and children. Especially as their children get older and face different challenges, pray, pray, pray. Pray for favor with their teachers (even homeschoolers have other teachers, as violin teachers, etc.) and so on. We have seen God's answers to our prayers for our family over and over through the years. When you don't know what to do about a situation (in earlier days it was the car seat situation or nursing or naptime questions and issues), pray. Please pray every day.

Also, I would like to share one concept of teaching children manners and kindness, etc. I believe the best way to teach these concepts is just from our own example of being kind to our husbands and to our children on a regular basis and being sensitive to their needs. I've seen children through the years who know how to say, "Yes, ma'am," or "Yes, sir," yet often it seems stiff and formal. Words are fine, but words coming from the heart are the best. If you notice that your child's cup is empty, you can ask if they need more juice or water. Then pretty soon you will notice that they will be asking you, when your cup is empty, if you need more juice or water.

Another good thing to do is to teach them to be attentive to the needs of others. At first you can help them by giving them things to do, "Can you give this glass of water to Pastor Asher?" Then pretty soon you will see that whenever Pastor Asher comes over, they will remind you that he needs some water. Little children love to do things that they think are big and grown-up. So they love serving others. It comes from joy and love, not from some textbook lesson. And as you bond together and grow closer through the years by being kind and sensitive to each other's needs, they will serve you and be kind because they love you so much.

Another important lesson is that "Love thinketh no evil." If our children aren't acting right, it's often because they don't know how to act the right way. If an older child is being too rough with a younger child, it's a good time to tell them, "That's nice that you're playing with him/her, but you're so strong, you're probably hurting them a little. This is how baby likes you to play with him." And then you can show him and tell him how important it is that he protects his younger siblings because he is so strong.

And in order to keep the love of siblings strong, try to give the older child time to play or color or read without the babies around all the time where he gets frustrated and starts pushing them away, etc. Yes, it's a lot of work and takes a lot of time, but as your children grow up, you will be so happy when you see the results and they will be your best helpers to help the younger children for years.

I guess a good way to think of it is to think "long term" instead of "short term." Think of how to make brothers and sisters best friends instead of just trying to stop fights. They will need a lot of help and supervision for the first goal, but if you think "long term", it will be well worth it.

Thank you so much, Betty! We so enjoyed getting to know you and hearing the wisdom you have to share with us younger mothers!

Now, if you would like to enter to win your copy of *Enjoying Your Children; Practicing Biblical Parenting*, please follow these simple steps:

1) Sign up for our e-newsletter to the left. Only name and email are required.

(If you are already signed up, go on to step 2.)

2) Leave a comment below!

(Scroll all the way down. The comment box will appear BELOW everybody else's comments.)

That's it! TWO winners will be chosen on Sunday, November 1st!

other books [here](#).

You can check out some of the Weinberger's