

When a Bird Leaves the Nest

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From the day a little bird is hatched its mother starts preparing it to leave the nest. Each morsel of food brought by the mother is to provide strength and development necessary for its departure. The little birds watch the big birds fly as they await the day when they make their first attempts. Then the day comes when the little ones leave the security of the nest to try their own wings. Their world is never the same after that. We don't pity the little bird or the mother because this is the way it ought to be.

It's not a lot different with us human beings, or it shouldn't be. From the birthday of our children, we should understand that as parents it is our job to prepare them to "leave the nest" and get along in the world without Mother and Daddy always there. This is the end of Paul's exhortation to "nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). Parents do a child a severe injustice in cultivating absolute dependence upon themselves. Many a bride and groom are unable to cope with marriage because they have never left mother's nest emotionally. Some children (like some birds) try to fly from the nest prematurely and suffer severe crashes. But parents ought to have themselves and their children prepared for this departure by the beginning of college years.

May I suggest some things we can give them to help prepare them for the transition?
Give them:

1. Enough love to provide security
2. Enough discipline to teach them respect
3. Enough attention to give them self-esteem
4. Enough encouragement to give them self-confidence
5. Enough money to teach them how to manage
6. Enough gospel to keep them close to Christ and His church

If you'll pardon my reference to personal experience (that's the only kind I've had), it is just a few days until time for Bronwen, our oldest child, to "fly the nest," She'll be leaving for college, and while she'll be back home to visit, still, she will be making a life of her own from here on. But this is what we have been trying to prepare her for the past 18 years. To fellow-parents in the same circumstance, don't fret and cry. It is right for your child to leave. 'Scuse me, I must have gotten something in my eye.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in the August 19, 1976, edition of *Granbury Gospel*, weekly bulletin of the Church of Christ, Granbury, Texas, of which I was editor.]

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