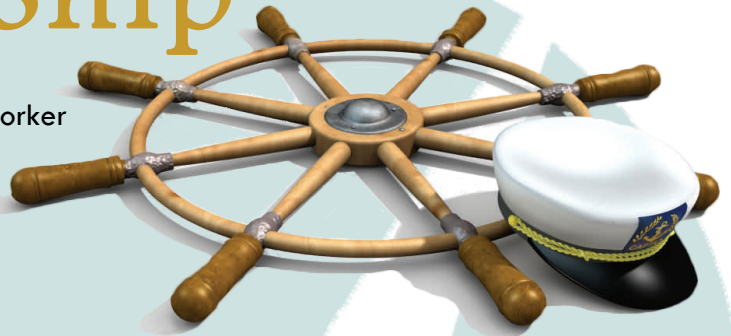


# The Family Ship

■ by Kimberly Kooyenga, MSW, Licensed Social Worker



**E**ach parent has his or her own story about how they were blessed with becoming parents. Regardless how you got here, God has a purpose for this course on which your life had begun.

Embarking on the parenting journey, you may feel you are in the position of Captain of your family ship. You are declaring orders, making decisions, and keeping things afloat. You work hard to maintain order with appropriate discipline and provide food and shelter for your crew. You seem to have everything under control. But, one night a terrible storm comes. You try to maintain order, but you become flustered, and you lose your sense of direction. Your compass is nowhere to be found. In a panic, the crew stops listening to your orders and carry out their own agendas. Your ship begins to sink.

This may provide an accurate description of how many families feel with the growing number of stresses in our daily lives—work, extracurricular activities, bills, and the list goes on. It can be difficult to maintain a sense of balance and peace in our lives. Like the Captain of the ship, it can be easy to believe that we are in charge and try to maintain control of everything at once. And, like the Captain, when we lose focus, we can lead our ship and all those aboard into chaos.



Who's the Captain of your ship?

As parents, God has actually placed you in the position of First Mate. God is the Captain and head of the ship. You look to the Captain for guidance and direction, and the crew looks to you to lead them. The Lord states in Deuteronomy 6:6-7, "And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise." Without being in touch with the Captain, you cannot give the appropriate directions. He has also blessed us with the Bible for our compass and training manual, but we must be intentional about using it.

Parents are to be leaders in their home, assisting in the spiritual growth of their children under God's direction. With God as Captain, we can navigate any waters. However, that also means that we need to humbly let Him give the orders. ■



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