

**FROM CHAPTER 1:  
WHEN PARENTS MISBEHAVE**

**TAKING ONE STEP BEYOND**

Were you the favored child or grandchild or student? How did *you* respond to *your* siblings or classmates? Were you insensitive to their plight because of the favoritism you received? Are you still reaping the benefits of your favored status without ever having given this issue much thought? What can *you* do to heal the breach that was caused? What are you *willing* to do? Have you been able to grow into your own as a person of integrity despite the way you were treated? If not, why not? If so, what helped you?

And what about you? Were you the one who was *not* the favorite, perhaps feeling like an actual or virtual stepchild in your own home? Were you the one for whom nothing you did ever seemed to please others? If any of the foregoing questions describe *your* feelings or experiences, how did you cope with your dilemma? What fragments or wounds still remain from the pain you suffered? Have you been able to grow past your mistreatment and/or your *resentment* of that mistreatment? If not, why not? If so, what has helped you?

Are you a parent that has shown a major difference in the treatment of *your* children? Yes, on the one hand, we acknowledge that all children are different and should be treated according to their own personalities – their own psychological bent. However, on the other hand, this does not give license for showing favoritism, which can breed dissension and hatred. Just as God grants to us – all of *His* children – unconditional love *with* loving discipline, so, too, do all of *our* children need *our* unconditional love. It is never a matter of whether or not they *deserve* it, but rather a matter of what parents *owe* to their children because of our heavenly Father’s example.

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