

**For the Love of the Family Ministries**  
**Missionaries to America's Forgotten Mission Field, the Family**  
**Pastor Terry L. Coomer**  
**Ministry of Elwood Bible Baptist Church**  
**P.O. Box 535**  
**504 North 12<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**Elwood, IN 46036**  
**(765) 552-1973**  
[TLCOOMER@juno.com](mailto:TLCOOMER@juno.com)

**These messages may be copied in their entirety to help Christians in the rearing of their children for God, strengthening their family, and marriage. They are not to be changed in any manner or to be sold. This header must be on any copy. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the author.**

### Is Ritalin the Answer?

Last year, 2000, in the United States nearly twenty million prescriptions were written for Ritalin and other drugs to treat what has been called Attention Deficit Disorder and hyper-active children. This is a 35 percent increase over 1996. Most of the prescriptions are for boys younger than twelve.

As a Pastor I have been greatly concerned to see and hear of many Christian parents putting their children on drugs such as Ritalin for behavior. I believe this is an epidemic of disastrous proportions to the children of America. It also shows the lack of spiritual training the parents are receiving in the church to rear their children spiritually as the Bible commands. **Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."**

In some elementary schools and middle schools, as many as 6 percent of all students take Ritalin or other psychiatric drugs according to the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration. Many students in many states have been put on Ritalin and other drugs of this nature when a teacher recommends the matter. One administrator said that parents have been told by teachers, "If you do not medicate your child, he cannot be in the classroom". Unfortunately, this has put many parents in an awkward position.

The Physicians Desk Reference says the "toxic side effects from Ritalin are nervousness, insomnia, skin rash, fever, arthritis, narcotizing vasculitis, bleeding, anorexia, nausea, headaches, dizziness, heart arrhythmia, drowsiness, chest pains, abdominal pains, stunted growth, toxic psychosis, liver damage, hair loss, and Tourettes Syndrome".

I would encourage any Christian parent to realize these are **mind-altering drugs!** These drugs have serious and in many instances permanent side effects, and does not remotely address the underlying causes and can in no way be regarded as a cure. When children are put on mind-altering drugs at such a young age what types of effects are being caused to a young child's brain that is not fully developed?

Ritalin is now the drug of choice at many high schools and college campuses. Several large universities are issuing warnings and believe we have an epidemic on our hands. Many college and high school students are now crushing and snorting Ritalin for recreational purposes. They also crush and snort Ritalin for homework and test purposes (to help them focus). When crushed and snorted, the drug mimics the effects of cocaine—more energy, heightened pulse and blood pressure. In high doses, it can even cause hallucinations. Ritalin abuse often starts much earlier in elementary school and middle school. Some children have died from Ritalin abuse.

Children across the country have been expelled or suspended for buying, selling, and abusing Ritalin. At a middle school in Durham, North Carolina, 10 children were caught snorting the drug. At a middle school outside Chicago, 15 students were disciplined for selling or abusing Ritalin. At an elementary school in Florida, an eight-year-old was caught handing out Ritalin on a school bus. Two children were taken to the hospital after swallowing the pills. This type of thing is happening all over the country.

According to Gretchen Feussner, who is a pharmacologist with the Drug Enforcement Agency, Ritalin is now on the DEA top 10 list of the most stolen medicines. She says, “kids as young as grade school and as old as college students are using Ritalin as a recreational drug”. According to Feussner, “Ritalin is a highly addictive drug, as addictive as cocaine”.

The question is asked is there really such a thing as Attention Deficit Disorder? Or is it easier to put children on mind-altering drugs than to train them as the Bible tells the Christian parent to do? There are many problems with this. Unfortunately, most Christian parents have never been trained themselves and therefore, they do not understand how to Biblically train their children. The unsaved of course have been putting their children on drugs for behavior at alarming rates. However, many Christians are following the world’s lead on this. It has been my observation that many Christian parents do not understand Biblical child training or have rebelled against it. Proper Biblical child training takes time, patience, prayer, and understanding that our life is guided by the Word of God and not the world’s standard. Many Christian parents are so busy they do not find the time to train their children as our Lord intended. **Ephesians 6:4, “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture (which means training with structure) and admonition of the Lord”.** Psalm 127:3, Proverbs 23:26, Psalm 78:5-7. (I would recommend reading our booklet “For the Love of the Family, Rearing Spiritual Children to Serve the Lord”). You can find this booklet on our web site at [www.churchpages.org/fortheloveofthefamily/](http://www.churchpages.org/fortheloveofthefamily/). We would also recommend Pastor David Sorenson’s book “Training Your Children to Turn out Right”. This book is also available on the For the Love of the Family web site.

Unfortunately, as I have watched these children the thought comes to mind they have never learned or will learn to obey as God has intended. **Ephesians 6:1, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right”.** Therefore, they will never have a proper relationship with the Lord. If a child never learns to obey his or her parents, they

of course, will never learn to obey God. Also, the child will always believe they have a problem. Therefore, they have an excuse for their behavior now or as they grow older they will have an excuse for their behavior or lifestyle. Putting a child on mind-altering drugs just for behavior purposes makes them dependent on a mind-altering drug rather than a personal, intimate, passionate relationship with the Lord. Many of these children have no appetite and in many instances act like zombies.

Is there ever a reason to put a child on drugs? Maybe if there has been an injury, or a chemical imbalance of some sort. If you are a Christian reading this article and are considering putting your child on Ritalin or other mind altering drugs just for behavior purposes I would encourage you to do two things.

1. Search your Bible for all the passages of scripture on child rearing and your spiritual responsibilities as parents.
2. After searching the scriptures pray and ask God if mind-altering drugs is really His answer for you and your children. Have you understood what God's Biblical plan for you and your children is? Are you willing to follow God's Biblical plan?

The Bible is a practical book, but it does not become practical until it is applied to your life. You must take the Biblical action God has intended for you.

Is Ritalin the answer? We believe this is a disaster for the spiritual life of Christian children. Unfortunately, this has been one of the greatest lies ever perpetrated on a society with long term disastrous results for the children and the parents.

**Terry L. Coomer is the Pastor of Elwood Bible Baptist Church, and the Director of For the Love of the Family Ministries. He has also served as the Publisher of the nation's fastest growing daily newspaper. Pastor Coomer holds Family Conferences in the local church. To have a meeting at your church or other needs he may be contacted at (765) 552-1973, [tlcoomer@juno.com](mailto:tlcoomer@juno.com), [www.fortheloveofthefamily.com](http://www.fortheloveofthefamily.com)**