



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Parents go on strike!



It was common for the dishes, garbage and dirty laundry to pile up for days when Cat and Harlan Barnard's teenage children refused to do their chores. So the Barnards went on strike, moving out of their house and into a domed tent set up in their front driveway. The parents refuse to cook, clean or drive for their children — Benjamin, 17, and Kit, 12 — until they shape up.

"We've tried reverse psychology, upside down psychology, spiral psychology and nothing has motivated them for any length of time," said Cat Barnard, 45, as she sat in a lawn chair at an umbrella-covered table outside her Florida home. The strike took Benjamin and Kit by surprise. They came home from school Monday to find their mother outside with handwritten signs that read "Parents on Strike" and "Seeking Cooperation and Respect!"

Cat Barnard, a stay-at-home mum, and her 56-year-old husband, a government social services worker, decided their children needed to learn about empathy and responsibility. The Barnards unsuccessfully tried smiley-face charts and withholding allowances to get their children to do chores. They even sought help from a psychologist. The tipping point may have been when Benjamin didn't offer to help his sweating, struggling mother work on the lawn Sunday, even though she should have been recovering from oral surgery. "I had absolutely no motherly guilt after that," Cat Barnard said.

The Barnards have slept on air mattresses in the tent and have barbecued, while their children fended for themselves with frozen TV dinners. The parents only go inside to shower and use the bathroom.

The strike seems to have struck a nerve. The phone has been ringing incessantly with requests for media interviews from around the country.

Passers-by from this community between Orlando and Daytona Beach have shouted out words of encouragement. One woman driving past the Barnards' house rolled down her car window Wednesday and shouted, "Good for you! You should put the kids outside!" Benjamin returned from school on Wednesday to find a dozen reporters on his parents' front lawn. He refused to say anything to them and went into the house, followed by his mother, who tried to console him.

A well-intentioned neighbour reported the Barnards to sheriff's deputies, who checked up on the family three times Tuesday. They were satisfied that the children were safe.

One of Kit's teachers also stopped by the house, thinking she had been abandoned, after the teenager said that her parents had moved out of the house. Cat Barnard said she and her husband will keep up the strike until they see some changes. "If we have to stick it out here until Christmas, then ho, ho, ho, we're out here," she said.

Comment — The above story may well raise a smile and much sympathy amongst many parents. Sadly, it indicates the descent into ignorance to which society is destined, as a result of its abandoning of the teaching of God's Word. That well-educated parents could raise such morons as the two children depicted by their mother, Mrs. Barnard, demands an



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explanation. It is not just the Barnards who face such a situation. No, it is becoming increasingly common across the world. Having recently travelled to Canada and USA and then almost immediately on to Australia, I have seen first-hand the universal problems facing modern parents.

Why is it so? Very simply, the clear and plain teaching of God’s Word on parenthood (which served our forefathers and mothers so well for hundreds of years) has been cast aside at the behest of modern “thinkers”.

Whatever novel ideas parents may invent, nothing will successfully replace the wisdom of the Bible.