

Your Little Brother

by J.R. Miller

Older brothers and sisters have a significant responsibility to guide and influence their little brothers in a positive way, setting a good example and being a source of encouragement and support.

Scripture: Exodus 2:4, Proverbs 22:6, Proverbs 27:17, Matthew 18:10, Galatians 6:1, Ephesians 6:4, Colossians 3:21, 1 Timothy 4:12, James 3:1, 1 Peter 5:3

Topics: "Sibling Responsibility", "Influence and Guidance"

Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the profound responsibility that older siblings have towards their younger brothers, highlighting the significant influence they wield in shaping their character and future. He draws parallels to the biblical story of Miriam and Moses, illustrating how older siblings can act as guardians and role models. Miller urges older siblings to be mindful of their actions, as their behavior serves as a powerful example for their younger siblings. He encourages forming a close friendship, answering questions patiently, and guiding their choices to foster a positive environment. Ultimately, he stresses that older siblings must strive for personal integrity to be worthy of the trust placed in them by their little brothers.

Transcript

Many young people have younger brothers, little brothers sometimes, in their home. In every such case, there is a responsibility which is not always recognized. If older brothers and sisters knew the influence they have over their little brothers, it would make them very thoughtful.

It is no doubt true, that older brothers and sisters are divinely appointed guardians for younger children. The story of Miriam and little Moses is one of the most charming stories of the Bible. While the baby lay in the ark among the bulrushes, by the water's edge, the young girl with quick ear and keen eye stood not far away -- near enough to see all that went on, and to be of instant help in case of danger.

In many a home, older sisters have played the role of Miriam to perfection. Many a man today occupying an important position in the world, owes the opportunities by which he was enabled to rise to his position -- to an older sister, who kept sacred watch over his infancy and early years. There are many men today in the professions and occupying high places in the world, who came from homes amid straitened circumstances, and who owe all they are to the sister who forgot herself, practiced self-denials, and toiled early and late -- that the brother she loved might go to school and to college, and thus have a chance to rise to the honor which she in her loving heart had dreamed for him.

Then sometimes alas! when the man is out in the world -- he forgets the weary woman, living somewhere in obscurity, perhaps in poverty, to whom he owes all his distinction and greatness!

It may be worth while to call the attention of older brothers and sisters -- to the little brother at home, who needs guidance, encouragement, and stimulus. Far more than you know, he watches you, and is influenced by your every movement. He will be impressed much more also, by what you do and what you are -- than by any teaching he may receive from you.

It is important that you know just how to make the most of your influence over him. You cannot do it by perpetually nagging at him; nagging is one of the most mischievous vices of the home-life. It is all the worse, because it is practiced in the name of piety and virtue. The best you can do for him is first of all to be good yourself.

When the young Princess Victoria discovered one day that she was near the throne, she said, "I must be good." The thought of the great responsibility which some day might be hers, impressed her most wholesomely. When you think of the influence you are to exercise over your little brother, you should settle it once for all, that you will be good.

Another thing you can do, will be to form a close friendship with him. Take him into your confidence. Let him talk to you freely and familiarly. Teach him to trust you, and never betray his confidence. Be a loyal friend to him. Treat even his most childish behaviors with respect. Never laugh at him. Do not hurry his development: it is like trying to hasten the opening of a flower; only harm can be done by such a process.

You can answer his questions, and you ought to do it very patiently. Remember it is a new world in which he is living. Every day brings him into a new world of wonders. He ought to ask questions. He would not be a wholesome child if he did not. You can help him by trying to answer these questions. You can guide his reading. You can quietly influence him in the choosing of his friends. This is very important. He does not know the good from the evil, and you can withdraw him from the company of those with whom it were better he should not associate. You can set before him visions of beauty which will become influences to draw him toward the best things.

If your own heart is right, and if you keep yourself in the spirit of childhood, you will be able to lead him in safe ways. The world is full of dangers. Your little brother hears on the streets many things he ought not to hear. You can quietly lead him so that he will instinctively repel all temptations to anything low or base or impure. You can turn his mind toward the possibilities of beauty within his reach. You can continually keep before him noble things in disposition, in conduct, in character, thus quietly inspiring in him the desire to fill his own life with such worthy things.

There is a great responsibility in having a little brother. He is always around, and you cannot get out of his sight. He has keen eyes too, and sees all that you do. You dare not live carelessly in his presence, for you may become his stumbling-block. There should be nothing in your example, which you would be sorry to see again in him.

This little brother of yours loves you, and wants to trust you. Your influence over him will be almost unbounded; you must see to it that this influence is pure and wholesome in every way.

The older brother must answer for his little brother; he is his keeper. He must make himself worthy of his sacred trust.

If his own heart is not clean,
if his own mind is not wholesome,
if his own hands are stained --
then he is not fit to be a boy's older brother.

The thing for the older brother to do in such a case, is not to thrust the boy away from his natural place of confidence and affection -- but to bring up his own life to the true standard of purity, sweetness, and beauty, where he shall be worthy to be a friend of Christ's little ones.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jr-miller/your-little-brother/>

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