Parents & Children

(The Christian Home – Part 2)

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THE CHRISTIAN HOME
Part II - Parents & Children

Subjects to be Discussed

*How to Be Ready for Biblical Parenting

*How to View Your Children
- --The value of children
- --The nature of children
- --The needs of children

*What to Expect from your Children
- --Obedience
- --Honor
- --Respect (for authority)

*How to Instill Character in your Children
- --Right attitudes
- --Responsibility
- --Accountability
- --Dealing with temptation
- --Self-control

*How to Discipline your Children

*How to Instruct your Children
- --Informal training
- --Formal family devotions

*How to Handle the Problems of Parenting
- --Being a single parent
- --Dealing with Rebellion
- --Guarding friendships and dating relationships

*How to Prepare for your Children's Future

*How to have Family Unity and Fun

I. HOW TO BE READY FOR BIBLICAL PARENTING

(God's Pre-requisites for Parents)

In order to gain the maximum benefit from the principles to be discussed in this course, the following pre-requisites must be met in your life as a parent.

PARENTS NEED:

A. PERSONAL SALVATION

God's principles are for God's people.

Before anyone will have the motivation and ability to apply God's precepts for parenting, they need to have a personal relationship with Him through Jesus Christ.

The sincere faith of Timothy's mother and grandmother eventually became his also (II Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15).

B. BIBLICAL CONVICTION

We live in a day of conflicting opinions regarding the rearing of children. The mass failure of the world's views is clearly evident by the product we see today in young people's lives.

Christian parents, however, must believe that God's Word, the Bible, is the sole authority on matters related to the family.

God's time-tested Word works!

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (II Tim. 3:16)

C. SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT

Without realizing it, we all are influenced to one degree or another by the modern secular philosophies regarding parenting. Our attitudes and approach to discipline, instruction, the role of mother and father, etc., have been affected.

God warns us: *"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."* (Col. 2:8)

D. HUMBLE TEACHABLENESS

To have a humble teachableness means to recognize that you do not have all the answers about child rearing. Humility is a willingness to be taught, a willingness to admit error, and a willingness to lay aside unbiblical pre-conceived ideas and to have an open, teachable spirit.

"The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way." (Ps. 25:9)
"Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning." (Prov. 9:9)

E. HOLY SPIRIT CONTROL

By the power of the flesh (the old nature), we are sure to fail (Rom. 7:18, 19). Without Christ's power, we *"can do nothing"* of any real, lasting, spiritual significance (Jn. 15:5).

Because the task is great and the time is short, mothers and fathers must parent under the control of the Holy Spirit. *"Be filled with the Spirit."* (Eph. 5:18)

Nine fruits of being Spirit-filled (Gal. 5:22)

1. "Love" - Agapao - a love that comes only from God.
   *An unconditional decision to meet needs.
   A parent filled with the Spirit has the power to be:
   --unselfish
   --give, not seek to get

2. "Joy" -
   A Spirit-filled parent can bring a jubilant Spirit into the home.
   Jesus
   Others
   You
   The Spirit can give joy even in the midst of trials (Jms. 1:2ff).

3. "Peace" -
   A Spirit-filled parent can bring a calmness into the home (in a society of turmoil and confusion).
   Worrying parents produce insecure children.
   Remember Phil. 4:7.

4. "Patience" -
   A cardinal virtue of Motherhood!
   --Patience not to blow up
   --Patience not to give up
   What do messy diapers, spilled milk, and disobedient children all have in common? They are all a test of your patience.

5. "Gentleness" -
   Lit. kindness.
   This describes a thoughtful Mom or Dad, who cares for his/her family.
   Their best interest is in mind.

6. "Goodness" -
   The parent who possesses this virtue does what is right, whether he/she feels like it or not.

7. "Faith" -
EX: Hannah - I Sam. 1:9-18, 24-28. Hannah had faith to trust her son over to God.
EX: Lois and Eunice (II Tim. 1:5), who passed their unhypocritical faith to Timothy.
A parent who is filled with the Spirit sees beyond the temporal (this world).

8. "Meekness" -
A gentleness, a soft manner of dealing with people.
A Dad or Mom filled with the Spirit is not harsh.

9. "Self-control" -
You have the ability to say NO to yourself.
A Parent filled with the Spirit is not a slave to TV, food, pleasure, etc.

F. PERSONAL GODLINESS

From the moment children are born, they are a "walking camcorder." Their little minds photograph and store each sight and record each sound.

A Godly lifestyle is essential to rearing Godly children.

"More is caught than is taught."

Your children won't do what you say - they'll do what you do! They will follow your example.

To expect your children to be something you are not is inconsistent!

". . . be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (I Tim. 4:12).

G. DILIGENCE TO WORK

Parenting is not "child's play"; it is hard work.

Godly children don't happen by accident. They are the product of blood, sweat, and tears. It takes work to care for them, teach them, discipline them, and love them.

God promises: *"And let us not be weary in well-doing for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not"* (Gal. 6:9).

The effort you spend in sowing right seeds in your children now will eventually produce a harvest that will bring joy to your heart (Gal. 6:7; Ps. 126:6).

God's way is the hardest, but it is the best.

H. PARENTAL UNITY

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). Obviously not.

Christian parents must be in agreement as to: the roles of husband and wife; the goals for your children, and the how to's of child rearing.

Christian parents must be: *"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."* (Eph. 4:3)

I. DEPENDENT FAITH

The outcome of our children ultimately will depend on the grace and mercy of God. We must work as if everything depended on us, and we must trust as if everything depended on God (indeed it does). Trust the living God to do what you cannot do. Only God can shape a person's heart and attitude.

Faith honors God and God honors faith (Heb. 11:1-6).

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." (Prov. 3:5-6)

"Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." (Ps. 127:1)

II. HOW TO VIEW YOUR CHILDREN

A. The Value of Children

1. Children are a gift from God.

a. Psalm 127:3 - *"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."*

b. Jacob said regarding his children: *"The children which God hath graciously given they servant"* (Gen. 33:5)

c. He . . . *"maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the Lord"* (Ps. 113:9)

d. Ruth 4:13 - *"So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son."*

2. God uniquely forms and gifts each child.

a. Psalm 139:13-18 -

1) God forms the child's body parts (v. 13 - *"possess"* = to form; *"reins"* = inner parts)

2) God joins each body part together (*"covered"* = to weave)

3) God sees the child's development (v. 15-16a)

4) God plans the child's development (v. 16) (Ps. 94:9 - *"He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?")*

Even those with mental problems or physical deformities are formed for God's glory (Exod. 4:11; John 9:1-3)

b. Jer. 1:5 - *"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."*

(cp. II Cor. 4:7)

Abortion De-values the Life of Children

The following biblical principles must be applied to the issue of abortion:

1. **Children are a gift from God** (Ps. 127:3)

2. **Conception is an act of God** (Ruth 4:13)

3. **The unborn child is a distinct human life from conception**

   a. The baby in the womb is alive (Ps. 51:5)
   b. The baby in the womb is a person (Ps. 139:13; Jer. 1:5)
   c. The baby in the womb is known by God (Ps. 139:13-15)
   d. The baby in the womb is developed by God (Ps. 94:9, 139:13-16)

4. **To kill a baby while in the womb is murder!** (Exod. 21:22-23)

   a. Even in the cases of rape and incest, the unborn child should not be condemned to death because of the sin of the father (Ezek. 18:4, 20; cp. Deut. 24:16)

   b. Taking life is the prerogative of God (Dt.32:39)

   c. God hates hands that shed innocent blood (Prov. 6:17, 24:11-12)

   d. Child sacrifice defiles a country (Lev.18:21)

   e. God requires blood when blood is shed (Num. 35:33)

3. God loves children and desires that they come to receive salvation at an early age (Mt. 19:13-15)

B. The Nature of Children

In order to understand a child, and to know how to teach, discipline, and control a child's negative behavior traits, it is essential to comprehend what the bible teaches about the nature of children.

The Bible teaches that. . .

1. Mankind was originally created in the image and likeness of God.

Gen. 1:26a - *"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness"*

Man bears the image of God in three senses:

a. Man is like God in that he is a person (with personality).
A "person" is a being who possesses self-consciousness, self-determination, intellect, emotion, will, world-consciousness, etc.
b. Man is like God in that he has a spirit
(Jn. 4:24; I Cor. 6:20; cp. Eph. 4:23-24)
c. Man is like God in that he has a moral nature (a basic, innate comprehension of right and wrong - Rom. 2:14; Eccl. 7:29).

*Since mankind (although fallen) still retains this sense of the image of God, his life has a dignity and is to be respected, honored, and protected. Doing so honors the Creator (Gen. 9:6; James 3:9). Your children are to be valued because of their self-worth in God's eyes.

2. Adam sinned against God and thereby died spiritually and adopted a sin nature.

". . . in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17).

"And you hath he made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1).

When Adam sinned, the image of God in man was not obliterated, but became marred, defiled, and depraved.

3. Adam's descendants were reproduced in his likeness and image.

Gen. 5:3 - *"And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth."*

Rom. 5:12 - *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."*

4. Each child is born with this <u>sinful human nature</u>.

Ps. 51:5 - *"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."*

Ps. 58:3 - *"The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies."*

Job 14:4 - *"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one."*

Is. 48:8 - *". . . I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and was called a transgressor from the womb."*

5. Because of inherited sinful human nature, each parent can expect the following traits in his/her children:

a. Each child is <u>prone toward sin</u>.

"A child need not be taught how to lie, to be selfish, or to do wrong; these things come naturally. Every sweet, innocent, cuddly baby possesses within his flesh the constant temptation to fulfill the strong desire of sin." (Fugate, p. 49)

b. Each child is basically <u>self-centered</u>.

"He wants what he wants when he wants it. A child wants to be fed what and when he wishes, to have the total attention of others, to play always, and generally to have his every desire fulfilled without regard for anyone else. . . Even when a child conducts himself with acceptable behavior, he may be acting out of <u>self-interest</u> to gain <u>attention</u> or future <u>reward</u>. . . The nature of sin will motivate a child to do whatever bad, or even good, that he thinks will cause <u>benefit</u> <u>to himself</u>. When parents recognize that the natural, normal tendency of their child is to satisfy his own sinful nature, they are ready to become successful parents" (Fugate, p. 50).

c. Each child must be <u>trained</u> and <u>restrained</u>.

1) Children cannot be <u>left to themselves</u>
(Prov. 29:15 - *"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame")*

2) Children must have their sinful tendencies <u>controlled</u>
(I Sam. 3:13 - *"For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not")*
The most cruel form of "child abuse" is to ignore your child's needs for self-control and to do nothing to help him/her learn how to restrain the sinful tendencies that seek to enslave him/her.

3) Children are most moldable when they are young
(Prov. 22:6 - *"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it")*

Our children are like arrows (Ps. 127:4) -- they must be pointed and launched in the right direction.

Our children are like wet cement - they take the impression of whatever you do to them.

Our children are like unhardened clay - pliable to the way you shape them.

Our children are like a tender twig - that we want to bend toward a certain direction. The twig "is to be bent with caution, not broken in the efforts of a rude and hasty zeal"
(Eadie, p. 262).

Four Stages of Maturity:

1. 0-5 years - Disciplinary Stage - must establish parental authority

2. 6-13 years - Training Stage - must give what & why info.

3. 14-19 years - Coaching Stage - give more responsibility (train toward independence)

4. 19 & up - Friend Stage - Adult to adult. Give advice when it is requested.

C. The Needs of Children

Since all children have the same nature, they all have the same basic needs. Due to personality differences, some children require more attention in certain areas than others.

The following is a list of needs that must be met by both parents. Your children need:

1. Love

a. *"Agape"* (□γαπε) love (I John 4:7)

1) This love is unconditional (Ro. 5:8; I Pet. 4:8)

2) This love is volitional (a decision or choice of the will)

3) This love is sacrificial (Eph. 5:25, 29)

b. *"Phili a"* (φιλια) love (Titus 2:4)

This love is affectionate. Children need hugs and kisses; small children need to be held often.

2. Security

Children need the security of knowing that mom and dad are:

a. Committed to God through Jesus Christ
(they need to know that He is your ultimate priority)

b. Committed to the Bible and its principles of truth
(they need to know that you will never bend on a Biblical truth)

c. Committed to each other for life
(they need to know that divorce or separation is never an option in Mommy's or Daddy's mind)

d. Committed to them
(they need to know that nothing can sever the relationship and love you have for them)

3. Time and Attention

". . .A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Prov. 29:15).

Because King David did not give Absolom the forgiveness and attention he needed, his son became bitter and rebellious (II Sam. 14:24; 15-17)

4. Patience

(Eccles. 7:8; Rom. 12:12; Ja. 1:3-4)

a. Realize how patient God is with you (Ps. 86:15)

b. Realize that your labors will be rewarded in God's time (Gal. 6:9)

c. Realize that nagging, yelling, and complaining accomplish nothing good (Ja. 3:16-18).

5. Encouragement

(Prov. 25:11; Eph. 4:29)

a. Look for any area of positive character to praise.

1) For initiative (when a child responds to needs without being told to)

2) For achievement (when a child does his best, although the job may not be perfect)

3) For obedience (When a child does what he is told with a good attitude)

"A child should be rewarded for obedience, but should not be obedient for a reward" (Ezzo, p. 82).

4) For skill (when a child displays giftedness, compliment him/her, but be careful to give the glory to God - I Cor. 4:7)

6. Example

(I Timothy 4:12)

a. *"In word"* - what you say

b. *"In conversation"* - how you live

c. *"In charity"* - how you love

d. *"In spirit"* - how you have zeal and enthusiasm

e. *"In faith"* - how you believe

f. *"In purity"* - how you are holy and set apart

Note: In setting the example, this does not mean that you never admit the wrong you commit. You must. Parents need to be real and transparent in front of their children. They need to see that you make mistakes, seek forgiveness when needed, admit fault.

III. WHAT TO <u>EXPECT</u> FROM YOUR CHILDREN

The old saying: "you get what you expect" is true of parenting. The reason why many parents get respect & obedience from their children is because they expect it. They know it is proper and right. In the early years of our Country, even unsaved parents required their children to respect authority. Today, however, many saved parents have accepted America's shifting trends and no longer require, much less expect, their children to respect authority.

Any society is only as strong as the families that make it up. As the family goes, so goes the country. To the degree a home is as God designed it to be, is the degree to which a family is blessed. When families are not governed by God's principles, the society languishes and travails in pain, sorrow, and frustration. If what this section of note teaches seems "out of date," offensive, contrary, and unbelievable--it is because parents have (to one degree or another) let the world brainwash them with its anti-family, anti-Bible, anti-God philosophies.

The fifth of the ten commandments is this: *"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee"* (Exodus 20:12; cp. Deut.5:16)

Parents should expect three responses from their children:
1. **<u>Respect</u> (for authority)**
2. **<u>Obedience</u>**
3. **<u>Honor</u>**

A. <u>Respect</u> (for authority)

All of life is structured around a "chain of responsibility" (cp. Mt. 8:10).

Three basic divinely established institutions to provide structure (order) and safety (protection) to society:

1) The <u>Home</u> (I Cor. 7:2ff; Eph. 5:22-6:4)

2) The <u>Government</u> (Rom. 13:1-f)

3) The <u>Church</u> (Heb. 13:7, 17, 24; I Peter 5:1-5)

These institutions involve submission and authority.

An "AUTHORITY" is someone with a position of <u>oversight</u>.

The position of authority is ultimately given by <u>God</u>.

This position of authority is one of <u>service</u> (an "authority" is a servant)

This position of authority is to provide <u>leadership</u>, <u>training</u>, and/or <u>protection</u> for the well being of the one(s) served.

The one who holds such a position of authority is <u>responsible</u> to God and will answer to God.

The one who is expected to submit to the authority will also be <u>accountable</u> to God for how he/she responded to the authority.

Respect for parents is so serious that God told Moses:

*"He who **<u>strikes</u> (physical disrespect)** his father or his mother shall surely be put to death";*
*and "He who **<u>curses</u> (verbal disrespect)** his father or his mother shall surely be put to death"* (Ex. 21:15, 17; cp. Lev. 20:9; Deut.21:18-21; 27:16; Proverbs 30:11-<u>17</u>).

Proverbs 20:20 - *"Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness"* (ie. his life will be snuffed out)

* Colossians 3:20 says:
"Children, obey your parents in all things:
for this is well pleasing unto the Lord."

Such obedience is to be:

1. **<u>Submissive</u> -**

   "Obey" = hupokouo" - lit. to <u>listen</u> with a <u>submissive</u> heart. Hence, to <u>hear</u> what your parents say and <u>do</u> it.

   (Attitude is just as important as action)

2. **<u>Continual</u>** (present imperative)

   Young men, as long as you are under their roof, you are obligated to obey them; young ladies, as long as you are under your parents' authority (until you get married), you are obligated to obey them.

3. Respectful - *"your parents"*

Respect their God-given position over you. Even if you are bigger than them, smarter than them or stronger than them, you are to obey them because they are your parents.

4. Total - *"in all things"* (KJV)

Obedience is not to be partial, but total (God does not qualify the obedience). However, the only exception is if your parents ask you to sin (to directly violate a Scriptural principle - cp. Acts 4:19-20, 5:29).

NOTE: God did not say "obey for this is popular" (II Tim. 3:2) or "for this is easy" (indeed it is often difficult) or "for they are worthy" (many are not).

Rather, He said, *"for this is well pleasing unto the Lord."* The reason for obedience is simple. It pleases God. It is right! (Eph. 6:1)

God commends the obedient, and condemns the disobedient. To be under the displeasure of God is a dreadful predicament.

Parents: Do you want your children to please God? (and thereby be under His blessing?). Then expect nothing less than complete obedience from them. Your motive in expecting obedience should not be your own peace but their well-being.

3 blessings that come to those who submit to authority (outline by Bill Gothard):

1. You grow in wisdom and character
(See: the example of Jesus as a 12-year old boy - Luke 2:49-52).

2. You gain protection from destructive temptations

"The essence of submission is not 'getting under the domination of authority,' but rather 'getting under the protection of authority.' Authority is like an 'umbrella of protection'."
(Gothard, Basic Seminar Textbook, p. 20)

3. You receive clear direction for life decisions

How does God speak to us? Obviously through His Word the Bible. However, in the details of life, how does He direct us?

*"One of the most basic aspects of faith is to realize how God gets His directions to us through those He has placed over us. . . Our faith multiplies as we see how God speaks to us through those He has placed over us." (Gothard, p. 20)

B. Obedience

See: Ephesians 6
CHRISTIAN CHILDREN MUST RESPECT THEIR PARENTS
- GOD'S WAY (v. 1-3)

To respect is to obey and honor and to obey and honor is to respect.

GOD REQUIRES RESPECTFUL ACTION (A child's duty is obedience) (v. 1)

"Obey" = implies a readiness to hear; a humble listening so as to do what you're told.

God told Saul: *"To obey is better than sacrifice"* (I Sam. 15:22).

Delayed obedience is disobedience.

Incomplete obedience is disobedience.
(Example: Doing something half way or in the wrong way - not according to the parents instructions)

Children should not be permitted to question why they should obey.

However, children may question what the command was (providing, he/she did not clearly hear or understand the request).

Also, children may ask permission to appeal the command.
That is, they may ask if they may say something in regards to the command given. If a child believes that the request of the parents is unreasonable he/she may with a humble spirit ask the parent who gave the request if he/she would reconsider. If the answer is no, the child should accept the decision as God's will for him/her.

"your parents"

A child is to respect based on the position of the parents, more than because of parent's personal character. EX: We submit to a police officer because of his position. We submit to our elders because of their position. We submit to our teacher because of his position.

The phrase ***"in the Lord"*** teaches three things:

It shows that the children being addressed are Christians.

It shows that the obedience is for the Lord's sake, to please the Lord.

If shows that the obedience is to model the same pattern as you would obey the Lord.

Children are to obey their parents just as all believers are to obey the Lord. Why? Because parents are the authority, just as the Lord is your authority.

The only time you can disobey your parents is if they ask you to do something sinful (Our Lord would never ask this of His children).

"for this is right"

The reason to obey parents is brief and simple: "For this is right" (correct, just, righteous).

If a contemporary, modern, liberal Bible was written by man, Eph. 6:1 would say, "Parents, obey your children, for this will keep them happy and bring peace to the home" (Wiersbe, p. 150).

One problem - This is not right! Contrary to God's order in nature (even baby animals are taught to obey their parents).

Obedience is good for children!

Obedience not only provides a better and longer life, but also:

1) Obedience teaches children patience
(to learn to trust and wait on God)

2) Obedience quips children with self-control

3) Obedience gets children ready for a career that will demand respect for authority

4) Obedience gets children ready for life, which will not always be "fair" or "just"

5) Your children will reap in their children what they themselves sowed as a child

C. Honor

GOD REQUIRES A RESPECTFUL ATTITUDE (The child's disposition is honor) (v. 2-3)

"Honor" = to view as very valuable, or precious.

Today, far too many children treat their parents like garbage. No respect for those who brought them into this world, fed, clothed, and schooled them.

How do children show honor?

1) By obeying them without complaint
(Having the right attitude will produce right action)

2) By providing for parents (when they cannot)
(Mt. 15:3-6) (NOTE: Money is no substitute for love)

Note: The Bible teaches we ought to respect the aged:
(Lev.19:32; Job.12:12)

Never refer to your parents as "my old man" or "my old lady"
Children ought to address their elders with respect:
"Yes Sir" or "No Mam" "Mr._____" or "Mrs._____"

Even if they are not believers, they are your parents, and you owe them love and respect.

God's Promises to children who honor their parents:

a. Such an attitude results in a top quality life - *"well with thee . . ."* (v. 3a)

Paul is quoting one of the 10 commandments (Ex. 20:12). This is the only one of the 10 that deals with the family. Why only one! Because if this command was kept, a child would learn the most important lesson of his life -respect for authority.

From this would flow respect for others, for leaders, and most of all for God!

"Well with thee" - they will stay out of things that shorten life and that take the real fun out of life!

2. Such an attitude results in a long quantity of life - *"live long . . ."* (v. 3b)

"This does not mean that everyone who died young dishonored his parents. Paul is stating a principle: When children obey their parents in the Lord, they will escape a good deal of sin and danger and thus avoid the things that could threaten or shorten their lives" (Wiersbe, p. 152).

God can mightily use young people who will respect your parents!

As a boy:

Samuel walked with God, Josiah became king and started a spiritual revival, David fought Goliath, Daniel stood up for God and would not eat the king's meat or drink wine.

IV. How to Develop Character in your Children

What concerns you the most. . .

--Your daughter's physical beauty and attractiveness, or her personal Godliness?

--Your son's athletic ability, or his dependability (you can count on him to do right)?

--Your child's academic achievement or his/her knowledge and submissiveness to God's Word?

--Your child's wit and charm or his/her love and thoughtfulness toward others?

--Your child's giftedness or his/her servant's heart?

--Your child's artistic ability or his/her availability to be used by God?

--Your child's popularity or his/her trustworthiness and integrity?

--Your child's financial future or his/her love for God?

As parents, our primary goal for our children should be that they have a character like that of Jesus Christ.

A child with good character has good character because he/she has internalized some of the moral "characteristics" (or attributes) of God. Therefore, someone with "character" has the essential inner qualities of integrity, honesty, strength, "backbone" or fortitude, uprightness, goodness, truthfulness, sincerity, conscientiousness, graciousness, holiness, patience, etc.

What is character?

The word "character" describes the over-all, premiere "characteristic," attribute, feature, or trait of a person's inner being.

A person may have bad character or good character. That inner, motivational, driving force of a person determines what type of character he has.

Character is a life governed not by self-interest or popular opinion, but by principle.
Character is what you are; reputation is what others think you are.
"Character is what you are in the dark." (Moody)
"Character is what you are when you are all alone."
"Character is destiny." (Elliot)
"Character is much better kept than recovered." (Thomas Paine)

The formation of good character is achieved by a heart that is soft and yielded to the molding work of the Holy Spirit, uses the hammer of the Word of God."

Many animals mature to adulthood in two years or less, but a child requires 18 years! Why the difference? Children, unlike animals, have a spiritual nature which requires the inculcation of moral truth. God intends for Christian parents not to just "raise" their children by feeding, clothing, and protecting them, but to "train the soul" of the child so as to produce an inner character that agrees with God's standards.

Prov. 22:6 - ***"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."*** This is an axiomatic, eternal principle and promise from God (NOTE: context describing causes and resultant effects)

"Train" = to begin, or initiate a young child in the right direction. To start out right.

Same word as when Solomon initiated/dedicated the newly-constructed Temple (I Ki. 8:63; II Chron. 7:5)
The word originally meant to *"rub the palate"* of a child with chewed dates to get it to acquire a taste for food; EX: midwives would rub palate with oil before child began to suck. The word means to make experienced or accustomed to what you want (as a horse gets accustomed to being directed by a rope in its mouth) (BDB, p. 335)

If we get our children accustomed to what is right, they won't depart!

"The way" = the proper road
"Old" = mature
"It" = the way (road) we trained them on

"Parents are commanded by God to initiate or start their child in a certain direction. He is not to be allowed to follow the path his nature would take him, but he is to be set on a new path. Dedication is not just a one-time initiation, but incorporates the entire training process. The result of the training is for this new way to become the child's own way of life. When this training transpires, the child will not leave the path even as he grows older and becomes an adult. . . Parents are not to wait for a child to choose his own way of life, but are to place him on the right path in early childhood. . . Parents must act as the external control over a child while he is developing his own internal controls. The parents' role is not to remain as the child's control for the rest of his life, but gradually to work themselves out of this job as early as possible." (Fugate, p. 65-66)

Through the proper parental example, training, and discipline of our children, we should desire that God develop their character by building in them the following traits:

1) Spiritual desire
2) A sensitive conscience
3) Sincere motives
4) Self-discipline or self-control
5) Personal initiative
6) Personal responsibility

A. SPIRITUAL DESIRE

1. Spiritual desire - the highest of virtues, since it seeks to love God supremely and to love others as oneself. (Mk. 12:30-31)

2. Spiritual desire has great benefits because it is the secret to attaining spiritual knowledge and blessing from God. (Mt. 5:6)

3. Spiritual desire cannot be "methodically," "mechanically," or "manipulatively" imparted to the children by the parents. it must come from God. He alone imparts a craving for spiritual life in a person.

   a. No person (independently) seeks after God (Rom. 3:11).

   b. God must implant a spiritual hunger into your children.

      How does God do it?

      1) Through His Word (Rom. 10:17)

      2) Through your prayers (Mt. 19:13; Mt. 9:38)

      3) Through your example (II Tim. 1:5)

B. A SENSITIVE CONSCIENCE

A "conscience" simply refers to someone's "consciousness" of ethical or moral laws.

The conscience is man's power to judge or make a moral decision about whether something is right or wrong.

All men (Rom. 2:14) have a conscience which basically gives a yes or no answer as to whether something is permissible (Rom. 2:15).

Like a judge, the conscience either approves or disapproves based upon the moral knowledge (law or standard) it has available.

1. A conscience is both untrained and trained.

   An "untrained conscience" = God has written basic truth (basic law) upon all men's hearts via creation (Rom. 1:19-20; 2:14-15).

   A "trained conscience" = Is developed by what one has learned to be true or fact based on a standard.

   The believer's standard is the Bible.

2. Parents must teach their children God's moral absolutes so that their conscience will have the right "rules for life" to live by (II Tim. 3:15-16; Rom. 12:2).

3. Parents must not behave in a manner that is inconsistent with the absolutes they teach their children.

   *Such inconsistency will cause the child to stumble (Rom. 14) and may defile
   the child's conscience (Titus 1:15).

4. Children should be taught never to do something that bothers their conscience (Rom. 14:23).

   "If you have doubts -- don't!"
   "If it is doubtful, it is perhaps dirty."

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT QUESTIONABLE THINGS:

Don't ask yourself what's wrong with a certain practice; ask yourself what is right about it?

1) Is it acceptable with God? (Eph. 5:10)

2) Is it good and wholesome? (Phil. 4:8; Eph. 2:10)

3) Will it glorify God? (I Cor. 10:31)

4) Would Jesus do it? (I Pet. 2:21)

5) Would it cause other to stumble? (Ro. 14)

6) Will it edify me? (I Cor. 10:23) Or others? (Ro. 15:2)

C. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

This principle is based on the following facts:

1) Each of us is a steward of our time, talents, and treasure, etc. (I Cor. 4:2)

2) We are responsible for our own actions (Deut. 24:16).

3) Each of us will give an account to God for our actions (Luke 16:2; II Cor. 5:10).

4) Much is expected from those to whom much is entrusted (Lk. 12:48).

5) Whatever we plant we can expect to harvest (Gal. 6:7).

Children need to learn to:

1. Maintain what God has given in nature
(EX: not to litter, waste, or ruin God's creation or creatures - Ps. 19:1; Prov. 12:10).

2. Maintain what God has given him
(to be good stewards of toys and other goods).

3. Maintain what God has given to others

Teaching respect for other's property shows a child the principle of ownership (Ex. 22:1ff).

Teaching respect for other's rights shows the child the principle of human dignity (Ja. 2:5; 3: 9-10).

Practical areas in which children must learn to be personally responsible:

1. If a child sins against another person, he must:

--confess the sin to God and admit it to those he sinned against
--restore any loss of damaged or stolen goods
--ask forgiveness

Mt. 18:15ff

2. If a child breaks, steals, or ruins the property of others, he must be responsible to replace it
(from his own allowance or savings)

3. **If a child has a pet, he/she needs to be given responsibility to <u>care</u> for it**

4. **If a child is given responsibility, he/she must be expected to <u>fulfill it faithfully</u>**

   EX: cleaning room
   making bed
   other delegated chores

5. **If a child is given an allowance, he/she must learn how to manage the money**
   EX: A small child given four quarters per week could learn to be a good steward of it by:

   1) <u>Giving</u> the first quarter to God (Prov. 3:9-10; II Cor. 9:7)

   2) Putting the second quarter into a <u>long-term savings</u> account (for a future goal) (Prov. 6:8; 30:25)

   3) Putting the third quarter into a <u>short-term savings</u> account (for something desired to purchase in the near future)

   4) <u>Spending</u> the fourth quarter in a way that would please God (I Cor. 10:31)

Ways in which parents <u>fail</u> in teaching their children responsibility:

1. When their child is accused of wrong, they immediately take their child's side (Prov. 18:13).

2. When their child makes a mess, the parent always cleans it up.

3. So as to prevent their child from failing in a responsibility (Ex: school homework), the parent does it for them.

4. When their child gets in trouble, the parent always immediately bails them out without holding them accountable.

5. Many parents simply fail to oversee their child's behavior and actions, so they run wild!

D. SELF-DISCIPLINE or SELF-CONTROL

I Cor. 9:24-27 - Discipline is temperance
"temperate" (v. 25) = self-control; strength or power over self.
(a rigid discipline for an athlete)

Gal. 5:23 - Self-Control is a fruit of Spirit

II Pet. 1:6 - Self-Control is built upon faith

II Tim. 3:3 - Self-control will be scarce in the "last days"
"incontinent" - no ability to contain your lusts, without self-control

We are living in an undisciplined age. Where we constantly hear messages saying: "Do your own thing," "if it feels good, do it," "have it your way," "You deserve a break today," etc. Technology has given us more luxury, more time to be idle, and hence more time to sin. "Idle hands are the devil's workshop."

The Bible says: In the last days, *"men shall be lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God"* (II Tim. 3:4)

How can I train my children to be disciplined?

TRAIN YOUR CHILDREN TO:

1. DO RIGHT, EVEN WHEN IT HURTS! (Acts 4:18-21; 5:29)
(The Principle of Duty)

It is telling the truth, even when it will cost you.
It is doing right, when you don't feel like it.
It is refusing to do wrong, even though "everybody's" doing it.

2. DENY THEMSELVES, WHEN THEIR WILL CONFLICTS WITH GOD'S!
(Mk. 8:30-38)
(The Principle of self (Spirit) control)

"Deny himself" = the basic idea is to say "No." It is to disown oneself, to turn away from the idolatry of self-centeredness.

3. WORK HARD AT WHAT REALLY COUNTS IN LIFE! (I Tim. 4:7)
(The Principle of priorities)

4. WAKE UP, WHEN THEY WANT TO SLEEP IN LATE!
(Prov. 6:6-11)l

5. NOT PROCRASTINATE, WHEN "LATER" SOUNDS APPEALING!
(Prov. 3:27, 28)
(The principle of promptness [punctuality])

6. NOT COMPROMISE, WHEN "GIVING IN" IS THE EASIER CHOICE! (Daniel chapters 1, 3, 6)
(The principle of convictions)

a. PERSONAL SEPARATION (Daniel 1:1-21; *v.8)
(We need conviction not to defile ourselves)

b. PERSONAL OBEDIENCE (Daniel 3)
(We need conviction not to bow down to anything other than God)
The test of a man's convictions is what he will compromise.

c. PERSONAL DEVOTIONS (Daniel 6)
(We need conviction not to stop communing with God)

7. NOT QUIT, WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH!
(Acts 13:13; 5:36-41; II Tim.4:9-11)
(The principle of patience [endurance])

EX: running from difficulties
avoiding certain people/problems/challenges
seeking the easy way out, rather than the right way
spiritual and physical lethargy

Practical Areas in which children need self-control:

1. Restricting eating to meal times
   (gluttony starts when children's eating behavior goes unrestrained when they are young - Prov. 23:2)

2. Waiting for the family to pray and thank God for the food before eating (I Tim. 4:4)

3. Allowing visitors or guests to be served first
   (this teaches respect and honor for company - Heb. 13:2)

4. Not fooling around or playing at the dinner table
   (they need to know there is a time and place for playing)

5. Picking up their toys and putting them away after playing with them

6. Submitting to the parent's discretion as to what the children watch on TV or listen to on the radio, and when (Ps. 119:37)

7. Not interrupting someone else's conversation
   (either while communicating with someone in person or on the telephone)

8. Learning to put others (EX: siblings and peers) ahead of themselves (Phil. 2:4)

V. SINCERE MOTIVES

In a world of facades, fake appearances, false impressions, deceitful images, mirages, masks, and artificiality, we need to be people who are REAL or genuine.

The Christian life is not theatrics, it's not an act, it's not a game of pretending. It is to be a real, genuine relationship with God that results in real, genuine works for God.

We as parents must concern ourselves with the hearts of our children.

We should desire that our children be properly motivated to do right. What is a "motive"? It is simply a reason for which one does or does not do something. What is it that should motivate our children to do right?

The answer is simple: LOVE (I Cor. 13)

First, a love for God (Mk. 12:30).

Our love for God is conditioned on our realization of His love for us (I Jn. 4:19; cp. Rom. 5:8). Love is an outgrowth of our faith in God's gracious promise of eternal life (--faith is trusting God's Word--Love is the response and result of our faith).

Faith in God produces a love for God which results in properly motivated works for God. *"Faith. . . worketh by love"* (Gal. 5:6).

Second, a love for others (Mk. 12:31).

Our love for others is an unselfish, unconditional, sacrificial giving for their well-being. It is the result of experiencing God's love (I Jn. 4:7-8, 11)

Christian parents need to teach their children that God is to be the reason for their behavior. He is to be the One they aim to please. Since God is always good and never changes, He is a consistent reason to motivate good behavior.

What should not be our children's motivation:

1. Recognition (Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18)

--To be seen of people (for example, peers) so as to give them an impression that we are something we really are not.

2. Rewards (John 12:43)

"Reward dependency. . . occurs when a child is conditioned to respond in obedience only when he sees something in it for himself. His obedience is based upon 'external' stimulus (i.e. 'the carrot on the stick') rather than anything 'internal'." (Ezzo, p. 84).

Often, "parents use bribes, threats, and scare-tactics in order to gain temporary control of their children's behavior" (Ezzo, p. 84).

Parents must never barter for obedience, but should recognize it and express appreciation for it.

"A child should be rewarded for obedience but should not be obedient for a reward" (Ezzo, p. 82).

A child should be rewarded, since this shows that the parents appreciated the child's effort or accomplishment, but children should not be manipulated to do right for a reward.

How to Reward your Child:

Rewards may be tangible or intangible.

If tangible, the reward need not be something big or expensive; what a child finds value in is the appreciation the reward represents.

Tangible rewards are especially beneficial for smaller children, but as the child matures, the parent may reward him/her with intangible forms of appreciation.

A child's reward most often will simply be a pat on the head, a hug or the encouraging words "Well done" (Mt. 25:21).

F. PERSONAL INITIATIVE

Personal initiative describes a person who does something good for someone else without being asked (without prior instruction).

When a Christian child sincerely and unpretentiously does a good deed of his own volition, he/she shows that:

1) God has done a work in his/her heart
   (Parents must pray for God to move the hearts of their children).
2) The child has the capability of being self-motivated (motivated without external stimuli).
3) The child evidences a true mark of inner character.

Personal initiative should be rewarded (see section on "Sincere Motives").

"How to Raise a Brat"

When an infant, always feed on demand.

When crying, always pick up.

When having trouble sleeping, always rock to sleep.

When throwing a fit, say, "Isn't that cute?"

When the child disobeys, overlook it.

When he/she has a conflict with a little friend,
always defend your Child.

When the child wants something,
always give it right away.
(NOTE: A good parent always gives the child what he/she needs!
--But what he/she sometimes needs is a NO!)

When the child sins, never spank or teach.
If you do spank, do it inconsistently.

When you want obedience, barter for it
(EX: "If you're good, I'll give you this")
The child learns to be a manipulator.

V. How to DISCIPLINE Your Children

Years ago, the then Duke of Windsor (who referred to the rod as a switch) said, "Everything in the American home is controlled by switches -- except the children!"

A. The PATTERN of Discipline is our HEAVENLY FATHER

"My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."(Proverbs 3:11,12)

1. Job 5:17, 18 -
2. Psalm 119:65-72
3. Heb. 12:5-11

B. The MOTIVE of Discipline is LOVE for the Child

"For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." (Proverbs 3:12)

1. Prov. 3:12 - "delight"
2. Prov. 13:24 - "love"

C. The TIMING of Discipline is EARLY

"He that spareth (withholds) his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chastenth him betimes." (Proverbs 13:24)
"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare (hold back) for his crying" (Proverbs 19:18)

1. Prov. 13:24 - "betimes"

   "Betimes" = at dawn; at first light" (the word means disciplining early)
   "betimes" (early) = 1) young in life (diligence from toddler age)
   2) early in the offense (right away in the offense).

   "Correction begins when the child begins to resist the will of the parent. Generally, this is when the child begins to crawl around or reach for things that would be harmful to him or are valuable (such as lamps, cords, TV tuning knobs, china, etc.)" (Victorious Ventures, p. 13)

2. Prov. 19:18 - "while there is hope"

How long to spank?

By the age of: 5 years - 85% spanking should be completed
5-10 years - 95%
10-13 years- 99%
13-15 years-100%

(Normally, parents should not spank a teenager - this form of correction is too late then)
(Ezzo, p. 55)

Four Stages of Maturity:

1)	0-5 years -	Disciplinary Stage -	must establish parental authority
2)	6-13 years -	Training Stage -	must give what & why info.
3)	14-19 years	Coaching Stage -	give more responsibility (train toward independence)
4)	19 & up -	Friend Stage -	Adult to adult. Give advice when it is requested.

If your child were headed toward the road after a ball, and a car was coming, do you have the confidence that your "Stop!" could save his life?

We must train them so that if they are headed for physical or spiritual danger, my "Stop!" will protect them.

D. The REASON for Discipline is REBELLION to AUTHORITY

"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Proverbs 22:15)

1. "Foolishness" -

2. "Heart" - rebellious attitudes must be disciplined as well as actions

When do I discipline?

Answer: ***For every act of rebellion against authority.***

Definition of Rebellion: Rebellion is the act of determined (willful) defiance of, or resistance to any authority or controlling power. (Fugate)

We do not chastise for clumsiness or mistakes, but for willful rebellion.

Examples of Rebellion:

1) Rebellious Attitude

When the child pouts or whines (throws fit).

Never call sin "cute" or view it as "funny". Disobedience is nothing to laugh at. It seems small now, but this attitude will manifest itself on a greater scale later.

Jesus showed that wrong attitude is just as sinful as wrong action. (Ex. Hatred is the equivalent of murder; Lust is the equivalent of adultery)

2) Rebellious Action

a. When the child disobeys by omitting right action [Passive Rebellion]

When a child consistently says, "I forgot" - this shows he rebelled against putting an effort into learning the lesson.

When you give instruction - say what you mean, and mean what you say (Ezzo,p.43).
(Don't speak rashly, because you must hold them accountable for whatever you said)

If I ask my child to do something, and he does not respond (assuming he heard me), he/she is in sin. But if I call him twice, **I** am the one in sin!

Why? By repeating my request, I am reinforcing and encouraging my child's disobedience. This is, in fact, training them in unrighteousness. (Ezzo, p. 43)

For obedience to be real obedience, it must be:

1. Immediate - Delay is disobedience. Children are to obey the first time you ask (immediately). The reason they don't respond until the fourth time is because you have trained (conditioned) them that they don't have to until then (that you aren't going to do anything about their disobedience until then).

   After God teaches us something from His Word, what percent (%) of the time does God want immediate and complete obedience? 100%

   As parents, if we expect less than 100%, we are teaching our children disobedience.

   When we tell our children to be quiet, and they are quiet 80% of the time, we put up with it. What will you do when you tell your children, "Don't sleep with your girlfriend" and they only obey 80% of the time??

2. Without Question - The Child can ask "What" to clarify command, but never "Why" For example we as believers are to ask God "Why" about trials, but never about obedience. Sometimes God provides a reason, but we have no right to ask Why.

3. Without Complaint - Attitude is just as important as action. Grudging compliance reveals a heart that is not willing to obey.

4. Complete - Partial obedience is not obedience.

5. Exact - “Another form of passive rebellion is to do what is required but not in the way it should have been done” (Fugate, p. 119)

Rebellious Action (Continued)

When has my child rebelled?

b. When the child disobeys by committing wrong action [Active Rebellion]

When a child talks back, he has rebelled.

A child commits “active rebellion” when he/she says “no” to your command or instruction; or defiantly “walks away.”

When a child does what he/she knows was a violation of the parents rules or standards. [Before you can rightly hold a child responsible for disobedience, you must make sure that you have informed the child regarding that offence.]

If a dad gives a command, and the child appeals to mom. That child has just undermined Dad's authority.

Another example of challenging authority: The reply, "Why can't I" or "Do I have to?"

E. The BALANCED METHOD of Discipline is PHYSICAL Correction and VERBAL Training

"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." (Proverbs 29:15)

1. "The Rod"

The Bible uses the word "rod" in these ways:

a. A symbol of guidance and protection (Psalm 23:4)
b. A symbol of authority and rulership (Exodus 4:20; 17:9)
c. A symbol of chastisement (II Sam.7:14; Job 9:34; 21:9; Is.9:4; 10:5; 30:31; Psalm 2:9)

"The rod, as used in a physical sense, came from a branch of a tree or the stem of a bush. The context rules as to which rod is implied. Just as the rod in "*Thy rod and thy staff*" is not a thin off-shoot of a bush, the rod in the "*Rod of correction*" is not a five pound branch. Context and common sense points to a rod of correction which has flex to it. We should not chastise our children with anything that is stiff and unbending. A wooden spoon could possibly break fingers that get in the way, cause vertebrae damage if struck too high and damage skin tissue. However, an instrument with flex will sting without inflicting bone or muscle damage since the flex itself absorbs much of the shock at contact." (Ezzo, p.74)

Some propose that if you use your hand, the child may so associate your hand with spanking that he/she may jump or flinch whenever you raise your hand (ex. To scratch your head).

Will spanking teach the child to hit others and be a violent person? No! But violent or hostile treatment of him will. Spanking that is in a controlled, Biblical manner will prevent the child from being violent; Reason: Each time he is violent toward a sibling or other person, if spanked he will know that such behavior will bring on him painful results (much like how a child learns to respect heat by feeling the consequences to touching the stove. (As a child learns through the school of hard knocks, "he accumulates bumps, bruises, scratches and burns, each one teaching him about life's boundaries. Do these experiences make him a violent person? No! The pain associated with these events teaches him to avoid making the same mistakes again." (Dobson)

2. "And Reproof"

Discipline is more than spanking.

There are two parts to discipline (Prov. 29:15): "The Rod and Reproof" --

physical chastisement (negative)

verbal instruction (positive)

Ephesians 6:4 - "Admonition" = lit. "to put into the mind" (not merely factual information, but right attitudes and principles of behavior)

The rod without reproof will not be effective to properly teach your children.

This is sure to "provoke them to wrath" (Eph.6:3)

The STEPS of the discipline process

1) Before spanking, make sure that the child knows what he is doing wrong. (Explain how it is disobedience & rebellion)

2) Spank with a thin, flexible rod that will sting not damage.
(5-7 spanks usually enough; This depends on the age of the child)
Make sure you are <u>not</u> spanking out of anger; or in a violent manner.
[Note: A wooden or a plastic dowel (thin round stick) may be used in cases when you cannot obtain a good useful "rod")

Spank firm enough to outweigh the pleasure of sin.
Parents should not chastise through clothing that is too thick.

3) After spanking,

a) Talk to him about what he did wrong (explain it as sin against God; warn him not to repeat the offense)

b) Pray with him;

c) Reaffirm your love for him;

d) Have the child remain alone for a few minutes to ponder (think about) the lesson learned, and to talk to God about it.

e) Have the child review the lesson he/she learned with the parent who did the disciplining.

f) Then consider the issue resolved and over (providing the child's attitude and action conform to what you desired)

Discipline is over when the child:

(1) admits guilt

(2) Shows a change of attitude & action

4) The child should then willingly do what you asked; or not do what you prohibited (a repentant attitude is your goal)

Practical teaching about the use of "The Rod"

a. The spanking should sting not damage -

Is spanking child abuse? No - not if it is done in the Bible way.

Actually, a lack of spanking is permanent injury to their character and thus true abuse.

Child abuse occurs most often in cases where the parents do not properly spank their children. Such permissive parents allow their children to "go wild" and "get on their nerves," and then in frustration and anger strike out in a violent manner at their children.

A proper spanking should sting, not damage. It is pain for the purpose of healing. (EX. a doctor cuts a person with a knife; an attacker does the same thing -- but the motive (purpose) and method is different.

Never slap a child's face or strike other parts of the body, pull hair, ears, or drag by an arm, or shake the child (Note: shaking an infant can cause brain damage or even death!)

Abuse of physical discipline: In superstitious Dark Ages (8th - 12th cent.), it was believed that crying children were possessed by demons and that beating them was the only way to exorcise those demons. Hence the phrase: "Beat the devil out of them" was born (Ezzo, p. 52).

Ephesians 6:4 speaks about the "Nurture . . . of the Lord" - we are to discipline our children the same way the Lord disciplines his children.

Their body is a temple and we don't want to damage their temple, but we do want to send it a message.

b. The spankings should be private not public

c. The spankings should be consistent not haphazard -

1) Prov. 19:18 - "Let not thy soul spare for his crying"

2) Prov. 23:13 - "Withhold not correction"

This means: Don't look for reasons or excuses not to spank (EX: "They're tired;" "He's just being a child," etc.)

Do's & Don'ts:

1) Be consistent: A very important part of parenting is not to just do it when you feel like it.
ILLUS: If the traffic laws or laws of nature changed every day, you'd be very frustrated and confused. So are our kids when we are inconsistent!!

*Never have a disagreement in front of your child.

*Never waver in the moment of confrontation on a rule or standard you have set.

If it is right - then over your dead body do you let your child win. When a child pushes against the rules, it doesn't mean you should move or change them!

Children push because they have a sin nature that will seek to challenge authority.

Also, Children push against your rules so that:

1) they can be assured that this rule is legitimate; and

2) they can be assured that you never will bend on what is right.

Sometime they may push to have security.

2) Be agreed: If both parents are not in agreement with how a child is to be brought up, this will frustrate your children.

*Never let someone else (with differing standards) raise your kids. Beware of permissive grandparents!

3) Be fair: Do not discipline them for wrong doing, if you have failed to previously establish clear boundaries.

Beware of "overkill":
Someone once said: *My father would use a cannon to kill a mosquito! I either get away with murder, or get blamed for everything"* (Wiersbe, Ephesians, p. 155).

Something to Think About

Question: Why are so many American families having so few children?
One Answer: They doubt their ability to control them.
Reason: America has abandoned "old fashioned discipline."

F. The <u>NEGLECT</u> of Discipline is <u>CATASTROPHE</u>!

Example: Eli's two sons (I Sam.3:13; 4:14-17)

"Spare the rod, spoil the child" (Ben Franklin)

"<u>Foolishness</u> is bound in the heart of a child..." (Proverbs 22:15)
"Thou...shalt deliver his soul from <u>hell</u>" (Proverbs 23:14)
"...a child left to himself bringeth his mother to <u>shame</u>" (Proverbs 29:15)

1. Prov. 22:15 - "Foolishness" -

2. Prov. 23:14 - "Hell" -

3. Prov. 29:15 - "Shame" -

G. The GOAL of Discipline is the Child's WELL-BEING

"Withhold not correction from the child: for is thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." (Proverbs 23:14)

"The rod and reproof give wisdom" (Proverbs 29:15)

1. Restoration - The child and parent will be close

The result of discipline is that the child will be brought back into line with what he should be.

Spanking is not punishment (to pay back), but discipline (to teach) right from wrong and to change attitude and action (Heb. 12)

2. Instruction - The child will learn "the wages of sin"

a. Your child needs to learn the difference between right & wrong

Many are living in the depths of sin today because of parents that didn't care enough to say: "No!" and restrain their children by discipline.

One teenage girl gave this testimony: "I never knew how far I could go . . . because my parents never cared enough to discipline me. I figured that if it wasn't important to them, why should it be to important to me?" (Wiersbe, p. 155).

b. Your child needs to learn the price for sin

Physical discipline teaches that sin always has consequences. Sin will always sting! There is a price for sin. The child sees himself as a law-breaking sinner in need of God's grace.

3. Discipline - The child will have sterling character and an ability to say no to selfish impulses

"Discipline in a Biblical sense is training your children in the art of self-control. As parents, you need to help your children acquire the skills necessary for controlling their emotions." (Gary Ezzo, "Whatever Happened to Discipline?" [Masterpiece, Summer, 1992], p. 15).

H. The BENEFIT of Discipline is BLESSING

"The rod and reproof give wisdom..." (Proverbs 29:15)
"Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul." (Proverbs 29:17)

1. "Wisdom" -

2. "Rest" -

3. "Delight" -

What if I have failed to discipline properly in the past?

Is there hope for parents who have been delinquent in training their children? Yes. it's never too late to make corrections. This is a giant step toward successful re-parenting.

First - Call a Family Conference; explain you have made errors in their lives; apologize for them.

Second - Explain what God requires in the areas of obedience and respect.

Third - Explain new course of action from this time forward. Join in prayer for wisdom to do what is right (Ezzo, p. 81)

The best way to insure that your kids turn out right is for you (as parents) to be right.

If you are tolerant of sin in your life, you will tend to be tolerant with your children.
If you are overindulgent - your kids will generally get whatever they want.
If you are selfish - so will your kids be.
You will feel like a hypocrite trying to correct something in your kids that you are.

VI. How to TRAIN Your Children in God's Ways

The world's humanistic, so called "futuristic" ideas on parent-child relationships are destroying our country.

One popular speaker even says that he looks for a world where there will be no schools, no families, and no parent-child relationships. He says, "To free the child, we must do away with parenthood and marriage. We must settle for nothing less than the total elimination of the family."

One of the major goals of Marxist socialism is to liberate children from the home and make them the property of the state. A child out of the home will not be taught any moral, religious, social, patriotic, or political standards or attitudes that are contrary to what the state wants (John MacArthur).

In this section of notes, we will examine 4 major passages of Scripture which describe how we as Parents must teach our children God's Will and Word.

A. Psalm 78:1-8

Introduction:

No parent can afford to neglect the lessons to be learned in this chapter.
Asaph's warning comes lest history should repeat itself (NOTE: the failure of Israel's forefathers - v. 11, 17, 18, 19, 22, 36, 37, 41, 42, 56, 57)

V. 1 "Give ear" = Listen! Give me your attention!
"O my people" = This psalm is for God's people. The lesson can only be learned and passed on by believers.
"Incline your ears" - The picture is of a young man bending down to get close to the mouth of a man of wisdom so as to humbly and eagerly receive what is being said.

V. 2 This verse is ultimately fulfilled by Jesus Christ, who spoke with parables (an illustration by comparison) so as to reveal His truth to those who had ears to hear, and to hide (veil) it from those who did not. Mt. 13:35

"Dark sayings" - a veiled saying; to say something that requires thought and interpretation. Truth that is hidden from those who are spiritually blind.

V. 3 For children to hear God's Word and know God's Word is a father's responsibility.

V. 4 "We will not hide them" - a corporate commitment to not conceal God's Word from their children.

"We will . . ." - it's a matter of the will, a decision. If you never determine to teach your children, you never will. If you are not committed to instilling God's principles into their lives every chance you get, they will never learn about God from you.

***Parents: Don't hide God's truth from your children (v. 4)!**

Four reasons why you must transfer God's Word to your children:

You must transfer God's Word to your children so that:

1. You will be a WELL-SPRING of BLESSING (v. 4)
(It's a matter of commitment)

"The praises" - God-honoring psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.
"His strength" - His attributes of omnipotence, etc.
"His wonderful works" - His actions throughout history.

"The praises . . . His strength . . . His wonderful works" - Note the positive nature of what fathers are to pass on to their children.
Are you a discouragement or encouragement to your family? Human nature tends toward talking about the negative. We need to tell the praises, strength, and works of God to our family. If we complain, the kids will say, "Why should I serve God, if this is what He gives in return?" A Christian who loves the Lord will never speak bad about the Lord, His Word, or His work - the local Church.

The greatest things you could ever teach your children is about the words and works of your God. To teach your children about math, science, history, sports, computers, business, dating, marriage, money matters, etc., without bringing God into the picture is inadequate. *"The best education is education in the best things"* (Spurgeon).

You must transfer God's Word to your children so that:

2. You will be OBEDIENT to GOD'S COMMAND (v. 5)
(It's a matter of obedience)

God continually commanded Israel to repeat His mighty acts to their inquisitive children (SEE: Exod 10:1-2,; 12:23-27; 13:6-8, 14; Deut. 4:8-10).

"Scripture has no room for parental neutrality" (Kidner, p. 281).

This contemporary idea of not imposing your faith upon your children, but rather letting them find their own way to God does not have its origin in God."

"He commanded our fathers"
Teaching children spiritual truth is primarily the father's responsibility."
(Is. 28:19; Gen. 18:19; Josh. 24:15; Eph. 6:4; I Thes. 2:11)

You must transfer God's Word to your children so that:

3. You will give HOPE to your FUTURE GENERATION (v. 6)
(It's a matter of hope for tomorrow)

Christianity is to be a "hand me down" legacy!
One reason why God teaches us anything is so that we would pass it on; give it also to others (II Tim. 2:2).
The principles of God's Word, though they are available for all to exegete out of the Scripture, are to be passed on from generation to generation.

The greatest thing you can transfer to your children when you die is not a "fat life insurance policy," nor a material inheritance, etc., but the transferral of Truth.
Do you see how your life could be multiplied for good?!

SEE: Mal. 2:14-16 - In marriage, God made the two become inseparably one for the purpose of producing a "Godly seed" (v. 15). A Godly progeny, a Godly heritage, a Godly legacy is what God wants!)

The real test as to your effectiveness as a parent is not merely measured by how your children turn out, but by how your grandchildren turn out! Your children will more than likely rear their children based upon how they themselves were reared.

You must transfer God's Word to your children so that:

4. You will PASS ON A LIVING FAITH to YOUR OWN CHILDREN (v. 7-8)
(It's a matter of life and death)

"That they might . . ." = this the result of teaching God's Word to your children:

Three-fold results:

1) Saving faith (v. 7a) - "that they might set their hope in God"
"Faith cometh by hearing..." (Rom. 10)

2) Continual faith (v. 7b) - "and not forget . . ."

It is possible (if we are faithful parents - Prov. 22:6) to raise a second or third, etc., generation of God-honoring children who remember His works!
NOTE: the sad commentary of the first generation out of Egypt - "They forgot His works" (Ps. 78:11).
"They remembered not His hand" (78:42)

3) Obedient faith (v. 7c-8) - "Keep His commandments"

The goal of teaching is not head knowledge, but daily obedience
Though our heritage and ancestors may not have known and feared God, through salvation and obedience to teaching our children, we can change the tide! We can stop the progression of evil, and raise up a new generation!
"Disobedience is not to be excused because it is hereditary. The leprosy was none the less loathsome because it had been long in the family" (Spurgeon).
"How blessed would it be if each age improved upon its predecessor." (Spurgeon)

B. Ephesians 6:4

This imperative is directed at the "**Fathers**." Why?

1) Teaching children spiritual truth is primarily the father's responsibility."

"The Father to the children shall make known Thy truth." (Is. 28:19)

Abraham was responsible to instruct his children and his household" (Gen. 18:19)

Joshua claimed this responsibility (Josh. 24:15)

God held Eli responsible for failing to instruct and correct his sons (I Sam. 3:f13).

2) The fact that God addresses the "Fathers" shows headship and ultimate responsibility of the dad. The father sets the direction and a Godly wife supports the direction.

1. THE NEGATIVE COMMAND: **"Don't provoke your children to wrath"** (v. 4a)

Compare: Colossians 3:21

Children need ENCOURAGEMENT

"Provoke" - To push your children; or harshly irritate them; to stir them up in a bad sense

"A child frequently irritated by over-severity or injustice, to which, nevertheless it must submit, acquires a spirit of sullen resignation, leading to despair." (Abbott, cited by Reinecker, p. 582).

"Discouraged" (from "a thumeo") which literally means to be without heat.

The word describes a child who has lost heart, his spirit has been broken, his youthful zeal, zest, spunk is gone. Rather than obeying cheerfully, because of harsh or improper discipline the child goes about his task in a listless, moody, sullen frame of mind" (Lightfoot).

Ways Parents provoke their children to anger:

1) Unbiblical discipline

   a) Harsh discipline (unloving attitude)

   b) Unbalanced discipline (need both - rod and reproof - nurture and admonition)

   c) Abusive discipline (uncontrolled or wrong mode and instrument)

2) Neglect (making them feel unwanted, a bother, not worthy of your time; so they turn to drugs, alcohol, immorality)

3) Favoritism (Ex: Isaac favored Esau over Jacob; Rebekah preferred Jacob over Esau)

4) Discouragement - "You never do anything right!" - A failure to commend and praise positive character.
   It takes seven praises to offset one criticism.

5) Unfaithful to promises - You build up their hopes (by promising something), then dash them (through neglect, etc.)

6) Pressure to achieve (nothing they do pleases you)

7) Physical or verbal abuse

8) Spoiling your child.

Who Dictates your Home?

A child will ask himself basically 3 questions: "Who am I? Where do I fit? What are the rules for life?"

Beware of "child-centered" parenting! All our relationships, activity, etc. should revolve around God, not our children.

Children shouldn't dictate whether you go to church, have company, etc.

If you build your family only around your children, and neglect your priority relationship with each other -- you will raise self-centered kids. They are already self-centered from birth - don't feed it.

2. THE POSITIVE COMMAND: **"Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"**

"Bring them up" - (Ektrepho) to feed; to provide nourishment (cp. Eph.5:29)

a. "Raise them in the nurture of the Lord"

"Nurture" (Paideia) = This word comes from the word: "Pais" which means child; and refers to the systematic training of children. Paideia specifically means to train a child by discipline; to correct; to chasten (I Cor. 11:32; II Cor. 6:9; I Tim. 1:20; Heb. 12:6f, 10; Rev. 3:19; Lk. 23:16, 22) (See the section of Notes dealing with "How to Discipline your child")

"When children are young, it is natural for parents to exercise maximum control. But, as a child grows older, the external controls should gradually be withdrawn. This withdrawal is possible only as he is progressively taught and demonstrates the willingness to control himself. It is important for a child to be trained before the parents lose their ability to control him." (Fugate, p.169)

When a child develops internal controls the parental external controls become less and less needed. A well trained child will understand the Parent's standards for acceptable behavior and the reasons behind those standards.

b. "Raise them in the admonition of the Lord" (v. 4c)

"Admonition" (Nouthesia) = lit. "to put into the mind; to correct the thinking" (not merely factual information, but right attitudes and principles of behavior)

Parental admonition will involve:

1. Teaching your children Bible Principles.
2. Encouraging your child's positive character and behavior.
2. Verbally confronting your child's disobedience.
3. Lovingly rebuking such disobedience or sin.
4. Instructing the Child as to:
   - What is right
   - What is not right
   - How to make it right
   - How to keep it right

"Bring them up in the nurture and admonition **of the Lord**"

The phrase "of the Lord" has 3 obvious ideas:

1) Bring them up the same way God brings up His children.
2) Bring them up in the principles of the Lord; In His Word.
3) Bring them up by means of the power of His Holy Spirit to His glory and honor.

C. Deuteronomy 6:4-9

"PASS ON THE TORCH"
(How to Preserve the Generation to Come)

"Deuteronomy" - "second giving of the Law."

God gave this book to Israel (and us) to reinforce (by repeating, commenting on, and explaining) many laws previously given in Exodus, Leviticus, & Numbers.

It was given so that Israel would not <u>forget</u> God's Law, but that it would be applied to every-day life when they settled in their promised land.

***God wants you to begin a legacy that you hand down to the next generation.**

How can you begin a new legacy (that upholds and preserves God's moral and spiritual principles for others to follow)?

1. Be All That You Should Be (v. 4-6)
(Let God light the torch in your own life!)

"Hear" - Heb. *shema* - This word begins the well-known "Shema" which encompassed v. 4-9 and set these verses apart as Judaism's basic confession of faith (their doctrinal statement in brief).

a. Let the Lord be the only God of your life (v. 4)

"Yahweh our Elohim is <u>one</u> Yahweh" - In a day of idolatry and polytheism, this sentence proclaims the exclusiveness and uniqueness of God.

This proclamation instilled the fundamental truth dealing with the nature of God, and this truth is that Yahweh is the <u>one</u> and <u>only</u> Yahweh (monotheism).

b. Love the Lord with whole-hearted devotion (v. 5)

It's not enough to merely know God theologically; we must love Him relationally.

According to Jesus, this is the first and greatest command in Scripture (Mk. 12:30).

"Thou <u>shalt</u> love" - The imperitival force shows that our love for God is not automatic emotion but a deliberate decision (volitional, act of the will, a choice). No half-hearted devotion will do.

Note: *Good <u>substitutes</u> cannot replace your first love! (Ephesus was a working [v. 2a], discerning [v. 2b, 6], and enduring [v. 3] church, yet had left her first love)

Loving Christ even comes above loving our family and everyone else (Mt. 10:37)

Loving God is not merely a N.T. priority, but is an eternal priority that also applied to the Old Testament saint. SEE - Deut. 10:12

HOW should we love God?
"Heart . . . soul . . . mind. . . strength" = Love Him with your whole being; with everything you have.
When we love God totally (with our whole being), He is:

a. The center of my affections *"heart"*
b. The center of my life *"soul"*
[c. The center of my thoughts] *"mind"* Mark 12:28
d. The center of my activity *"strength"*

c. Hide the Word of the Lord in your heart by memorizing it (v. 6)

"These words" - the command to love God, as well as the rest of Deuteronomy.
The only way to keep God's Word *"in our heart"* is to memorize it.
"Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119:11).
Ps. 37:31 - *"The law of his God is in his heart: none of his steps shall slide."*
Ps. 40:8 - *"I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."*
II Cor. 3:3 - *"Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."*

***"In thine heart"* -** not in one of thine ears and out of the other -- but permanently stored away!

Set the right example!

Joshua didn't just say, "My house will serve the Lord." He didn't just send the wife and kids off to church. He said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Josh. 24:15)

Fundamental, eternal principle: Like produces like.
If you sow potatoes, you don't reap tomatoes.

Beware: Your Children will not merely tend to copy your faults, but will magnify them!
Whatever you do, will be exaggerated in your children.

Deut. 6:5 - Half-hearted devotion is unacceptable. Verse 6 - Love must come from the inner self

It is only after personally appropriating truth, after internalizing it ourselves , that we can teach our children.

B. Pass On To Your Children What God Gave You (v. 7)
(Pass on the torch to the succeeding generation! Deut. 29:29b)

Teaching is to be:

1) **<u>Repetitious</u>** - *"Diligently"* = from a Hebrew word which describes the activity of sharpening a metal object by repeated strokes of a sanding block. (Don't grow weary about repeating lessons. Remember how often God must teach us (many times the same lesson) over and over)

2) **<u>Specific</u> content** - *"Them"* = the "words" of verse 6. The word, law, or commands of God.

3) **<u>Informal</u>** - weave teaching into your normal everyday routine.
a. Simultaneous with other activity *(<u>when</u>- "sitting, walking, lying down")*
b. Different locations - *"house road, bed"* (God teaches us not only at church [formally] but also during work, home, etc.)

4) **<u>Continual</u>** -
a. At different times (day & night activities)
b. All the time (from morning to morning)

While a continual, informal teaching of our children is the real key to their spiritual knowledge and growth, a specific time set apart each day is also vitally important.

A **"Family Time"; "Family Devotions"; or "Family Altar"** should be:
1) <u>short</u>
2) <u>serious</u>
3) <u>interesting</u>

Suggestions for a meaningful family time:
1) Have a <u>definite time</u> each day for the family to gather for a Bible time; Singing; and Prayer.

2) <u>Adapt</u> it to the needs of the family. (Generally make it so simple that the youngest child can understand)

3) <u>Vary</u> the order and participants.

4) Be <u>Creative</u>.
Some suggested things to do:
a) Use Bible Memory Materials
b) Use Bible Story Books for young children
c) Go through a book (ex. Proverbs) for older children.
d) Act out a Story
e) Put a Scripture text to music
f) Read a missionary prayer letter and pray
g) Make cards for the sick, afflicted, aged, and discouraged etc.
h) Get out the church directory and systematically pray for each person in it.

3. Fill Your Life And Home With God's Word So You Never Forget It (v. 8-9)
(Keep the torch burning!)

V. 8 ***"Hand" -*** To be a reminder that God's Word is to regulate our behavior (what we do).

"Between eyes" - to be a reminder that God's Word should permeate our thought life (what we think).

V. 9 A home should have God's Word displayed throughout it.
Suggestions:
--verses on cards (taped at conspicuous places)
--posters
--bumper stickers
--framed Scripture verses

CONCLUSION:
Are you the kind of person you would want your son to become?
Would you want your daughter to marry someone like you, Dad?
When you die, will you leave behind memories that point to God?
Will you leave your children a faith and example that will guide them when your voice speaks no more?

VII. How to Manage some Practical Issues Related to Parenting

A. Family UNITY

How to build <u>Unity</u> in your Home:

1. Eat Family Meals Together - Make much out of meal times. Make it a happy time; A time of communication.

2. Have "Family Nights" - Schedule at least one night each week to be with your whole family. Play games; Do a Special project; Take a walk; Plan a Kitchen Fun Night; Have a craft night etc.

3. Begin Family Traditions - Once a month, year; Holiday Traditions; Picnics etc.

4. Do Family Projects together - Build things as a family; Have others in mind and frequently make your projects for someone else.

5. Show Family Hospitality - Have people over. Invite new people to your home; Get to meet different church members and families this way.

6. Practice "Family Evangelism" - Pray for and witness to people as a family; Plan Neighborhood Bible times from your home each summer.

7. Work Together as a Family - Families need cooperation and delegation of chores and responsibilities. Cultivate a "team spirit." Minister together as a Family.

8. Create a Proper Home Environment -

a) Proper <u>music</u> Have a variety of Good, Wholesome, Godly (Not Worldly) Christian music in your home. Develop Your Children's appetite for Christ Honoring music with high standards.

Characteristics of the Believers "New Song" (Psalm 40:3)

The "New Song" God puts in our mouth is:

1) <u>Derived</u> from God
2) <u>Distinct</u> from the World
3) <u>Directed</u> toward God
4) <u>Displayed</u> in Public View
5) <u>Designed</u> to attract others to Salvation

b) Proper <u>Reading & TV</u> Have good books & periodicals for the family to enjoy. Keep TV viewing to a minimum and whole programs.

c) Proper <u>Attitude</u> - Have a cheerful, optimistic attitude; Don't be so negative. The Mother generally sets the mood for the home.

9. Go on vacation as a Family - Plan vacations with the interests of the entire family in mind. Christian camps & retreats are a blessing. Wherever you go, seek to help the local church at it's Pastor if possible.

B. Your Children's FRIENDSHIPS

What is friendship? *A mutual commitment between believers to companionship, to love, and to spiritual growth.*

1. Why do your children need friends?

a. Encouragement
Prov. 12:25 - "Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad."
b. Enrichment
Prov. 27:17 - "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."
c. Companionship
Prov. 18:24 - "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

2. Who is not really your child's friend?

A false friend is one who:
a. Is not sincere (27:6)
b. Is only interested in what he can get from your child (14:20; 19:4, 6-7)
c. Is hot-tempered and easily angered (22:24)
d. Is always getting your child into trouble (13:20; 16:17-19)
e. Is always looking for trouble (1:10-19; 4:14-19)
   1) They lead your child astray (1:10)
   2) They band for evil (1:11-14)
   3) They steal for sport (1:13, 19)
   4) They reap what they sow (1:17-18)
   5) They love mischief (4:16-17)
   6) They stumble in darkness (4:18-19)

***Types of "Friendships":**

1) Spiritual Friendships (develops relationships for mutual edification - a church)

2) Social Friendships (develops relationships for emotional needs - a night club, bar)

3) Superficial Friendships (develops relationships for business reasons - a business deal, bank/store)

4) Selfish Friendships (develops relationships for lustful gratification - a sexual/money manipulation)

5) Sinister Friendships (develops relationships for sinful exploits - a street gang)

3. Who is a true spiritual friend?

A true friend is one who:

a. Sticks to his friend faithfully (18:24; cp. Jn. 15:13-15)
(The principle of loyalty)

b. Edifies his friend verbally (27:5-6, 9, 17; 28:23)
(The principle of honesty)

1) Honest rebuke (27:5-6; cp. 28:23)
   a) Is verbal (v. 5)
   b) Is reliable (v. 6a)
   c) Is painful (v. 6b)
   d) Is helpful (v. 6c)

2) Honest advice (27:9)

3) Honest encouragement (27:17)

c. Loves his friend continually (17:17)
(The principle of fidelity)
1) A friend loves through "thick and thin"
2) A friend loves you the way you are

d. Forgives his friend cheerfully (17:9; cp. 10:12)
(The principle of mercy)

e. Trusts his friend confidently (10:12; 11:13)
(The principle of confidentiality)

f. Treats his friend respectfully (27:14)
(The principle of dignity)

4. How do you teach your children to gain friends?

a. Be friendly
Prov. 18:24 - "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."
b. Be sincere
Prov. 22:11 - "He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend."
c. Be graceful with your tongue (22:11)
d. Be faithful to your friends
Prov. 27:10 - "Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off."

*Basically, be what you should be, and you will meet and become friends with those who are like you.

5. Who Should be Close Friends With Your Children?

a. Someone who is <u>saved</u> (II Cor. 6:14-17)

b. Someone who evidences Godly wisdom

Prov. 13:20 - "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

c. Someone who is not <u>worldly</u>

James 4:4 - "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

d. Someone who will <u>build your kids up</u>, not tear them down

Prov. 27:17 - "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

****Basically, someone who knows, loves, and obeys Jesus Christ.***

C. Preparing for Dating & Marriage

Next to your children's relationship with the Lord, the next most important relationship will be with their future spouse.

Therefore, it is vitally important for parents to know what principles to teach their children regarding dating and marriage.

1. Teach your children the basic virtuous characteristics that will <u>prepare</u> them for dating and marriage.

Before you can adequately teach your children, you must have a Biblical definition of love, of marriage and its purpose and permanence, and of role responsibilities.

*The best way to prepare your children for marriage is to set an exemplary model in your marriage.

Teach your teenagers about:

a. Genuine <u>love</u> (I Cor. 13)

b. Accepting God's <u>timing</u> and <u>will</u> (Gen. 29:20; Prov. 3:5-6; Ja. 4:15)

c. The importance of <u>good friendships</u> (I Cor. 15:33)

d. <u>Priorities</u> (Mt. 6:33)

Parents must explain to their teen what to look for in a mate.

--Godliness over glamour
--Personal character is priority over personal appearance (Prov. 31:30)

e. Design for <u>sex</u> in <u>marriage</u> and standards of <u>moral purity</u>
(I Thess. 4:1--8; Heb. 13:4; I Cor. 7:1-5; Prov. 5:18-21; Ps. 101:3)

When children enter puberty and begin to have questions regarding sexual behavior, parents cannot neglect this topic. If children don't learn of God's design, standards, and purpose for the marital, physical expression of love from their parents, they will often go to their peers and the world for answers.

If parents answer questions that their children ask about reproduction or sex, and the parents answer frankly, unashamedly, and discreetly, this will result in the child feeling free to come to the parents with other questions and thus keep communications open.

2. Teach your children about <u>proper courtship</u>:

a. Teach your teens that serious dating is for "mating" (marriage).

(Serious dating should not precede the age of 18, or until both are mature enough and ready to manage the responsibilities of marriage.)

b. Because God created man as the initiator and woman as the responder, the young man should assume <u>leadership</u> in the dating relationship. He is the one who <u>asks</u> the girl for a <u>date</u>. In fact, girls should not make any kind of attempt to <u>initiate</u> a relationship with a boy (i.e. girls should not walk up and start a conversation, make phone calls, etc.).

c. What procedure should Christian girls follow in a dating relationship?

1) Remember you are under the authority of your father until you marry (I Cor. 7:36-38).

2) Before starting to date, meet with your father (whether or not he is a Christian) and share with him your goals for marriage: that yours will be the kind of marriage God wants, and thus be the happiest possible.

3) Agree that any boy who wants to date you must first ask your father for permission. This simply requires saying, "I am honored that you have asked, but before I can give you an answer, you will have to ask my father." This takes all the pressure off the girl and creates these benefits:

a) It makes the boy appreciate you more because what is easily gotten is not usually appreciated.
b) It decreases the temptation of the boy to mistreat you. If he thinks you are completely on your own, it increases the risk that he will try something.
c) It proves to the boy that your father loves you.
d) It gives your father a chance to discern the boy's intentions. A woman is more affected by actions than by motives, but a man discerns first the motive.
e) It places the boy under your father's counsel, which is exactly where he should be if the relationship grows into marriage.

4) Agree that anytime a fellow starts talking to you about marriage you will say, "If you are thinking about marriage, you had better talk to my father." This is tremendously important because so often talk about marriage is just camouflaged lust.

3. Teach your children about discerning God's will.

How can your children know who is the right one for marriage?

Follow God's principles for courtship:

a. Be submitted and obedient to the advice and discretion of your parents (Eph. 6:1-2).

b. Determine that you will date only Christians (I Cor. 7:39; II Cor. 6:14-18).

God forbids the intermarriage of a believer with a non-believer (SEE: Gen. 24:3-4, 28:1-2; Ex. 34:12-16; Deut. 7:3-4; Ezra 9:10-12; Neb. 10:30).

Examples of disasters caused by unequal yokes in marriage:

1) The sons of God married good-looking but godless daughters of men (Gen. 6:2).
2) Esau married two Hittite wives (Gen. 226:34-35).
3) Samson became betrothed to a Philistine woman (Jud. 14).
4) Solomon married heathen women (Neh. 13:26).

c. Determine that you will strive to **be** the right one, rather than focusing on meeting the "right one" (Rom. 12:1-2).

d. Be busy doing the general will of God, and He will guide you in the specifics of His will (Phil. 2:12-13; Prov. 3:5-6).

God doesn't move "parked cars"; rather, He steers us as we are busy ministering for Him (Acts 13:2).

e. Purpose in your heart that you will not defile yourself or defraud the one you date (I Cor. 7:1-2; I Th. 4:6).

f. Decide that the one you marry must enhance your ministry, not diminish or destroy it (Is she a "helpmeet" [Gen. 2:18] or a hindrance?).

g. Yield your plans to God's will in the vital area of dating and marriage (desire His will above all else) (Mt. 6:33).

h. Wait for God's timing (Eccl. 3:1).

4. Teach your children what to <u>avoid</u> in a dating relationship.

a. Avoid the "steady" relationship until the time is right.
(Have several friends and let God bring the right one alone in His time)

b. Avoid <u>situations</u> and <u>circumstances</u> that might involve temptations and trouble (don't be alone in <u>secluded</u> places).

c. Avoid physical involvement (lust can't wait until marriage; but true love can).

Tips for dating Christians

1. Consider your parents' wishes. Tell them where you are going and when you will return (Col. 3:20).
2. Be prompt in picking up your date, and return on time.
3. Plan your date with things to do and places to go. Idle dates often lead to trouble (Phil. 4:8).
4. Be courteous and considerate. Open doors and hold chairs like a gentleman (Eph. 4:32).
5. Don't show off or put on. Be yourself. (Eph. 4:24)
6. Beware of places of ill fame and temptation (II Tim. 2:4).
7. Remember the fact that because everyone else is doing it doesn't make it right (I Cor. 10:13).

VIII. How to be a Godly Mother

A. "QUALITIES OF A GODLY MOTHER"
See: Titus 2:4-5

INTRODUCTION:

What are the ingredients to make a godly mother? Varying opinions exist.

"The aged women" - the reason the older women are to be godly is so that they can pass on to the younger women godly wisdom.

The mothers of today are the product of the mothers of yesterday. What you are, your daughters will be. [Good advice: If you want to know what kind of wife that young girl will be, look at her mother.]

V. 4 "Teach" = the fact that these virtues need to be taught shows that they do not come naturally.

***In a world of many opinions, it is needful to know what makes a Godly mother.**

What qualities should every Christian woman possess?

A. LOVING AFFECTION (v. 4)

1. Affection for her husband

The phrase: "to love their husbands" is actually one word in the Greek - "Husband-loving" ("philandrous").
The word translated "love" is phileo, which describes an emotional, feeling love; or an affection.
Women are not the only ones starving for affection any more. Today, more than ever, men are.
God graciously created woman with a tender heart.
Women, being more emotional by nature than men, should find this type of love to be easier to fulfill than men do. (Men are commanded to have "agapa" love for their wives - Eph. 5:25).
However, God says in the last days, people would be "without natural affection" ("a-storgoi" - meaning family love, loyalty).

How will being affectionate toward your husband make you a good mother?

a. It will provide security for your children
(they will not live in fear that the marriage is dissolving).

b. It will remove selfishness from your children
(by being affectionate toward your husband, you are teaching your children that they are not the only ones who get hugs and kisses. You are showing them that the world does not revolve around them. NOTE: The command to love husbands comes before children).

c. It will set an example for your children to follow.
(You will be the kind of woman your boys will gravitate toward when dating. You will be the kind of woman your girls will pattern their lives after.)

2. Affection for her children

"To love their children" = lit. "children-loving" affectionate toward their children).

The same affection that is shown to the husband must be shown to the children.
Children need affection!

--Affection brings comfort - it soothes
--Affection brings a calmness - It relaxes tension in the home
--Affection brings a cure - It eases pain
--Affection brings a cause to do right - Mother's affection is a great motivating factor in a child's life.

A woman determines the emotional climate of her home.

"Compassion, empathy, and gentleness communicate the love of God better than the best written word" ("Kindred Spirit," p. 22).

One woman stressed the importance of a mother's love this way: "If I live in a house of spotless beauty with everything in its place, I am a housekeeper, not a homemaker. If I only have time for waxing and polishing, my children learn of cleanliness, not godliness. Love leaves the dust in search of a child's laugh. Love smiles at the tiny fingerprints on the newly cleaned window. Love wipes up the tears before it wipes up the spilled milk. Love is the key that opens salvation's message to a child's heart. Before I became a mother, I took glory in my house of perfection, but now I glory in God's perfection of my child." ("Family Life," May, 1982, cited in "Kindred Spirit").

God does not measure a woman's success by how much money she contributes to the family's income, nor by how spotless she keeps her house; but God measures success by how much she loves her husband and children -- This makes a real "home"!

Having a pretty house does not necessarily mean you have a home. *"A young soldier and his family were living in a hotel near a military base where he was stationed. One day, his little girl was playing in the lobby when a lady tactlessly commented to her, "Isn't it a shame you don't have a home?" Without hesitating, the little girl responded, "Oh, we do," she said, "We just don't have a house to put it in."* ("Kindred Spirit", p. 23).

B. SELF-CONTROL (v. 5a)

"Discreet" - lit. to have a "saved mind." (from "sozo" - to save; and "phren" - mind).

What is a saved mind? It is a mind that has been delivered from:

a. Vanities (EX: materialism, etc.)
b. Obsessions (EX: food, etc.) NOTE: The word can be translated "self-controlled" (NIV), pointing to the control over one's thoughts, lest they control you.
c. Distractions - Anything that would harm your ability to make serious decisions (EX: drugs, alcohol, etc.) (the word is often translated "sober" - Ro. 12:3; I Tim. 2:9; Titus 1:8, 2:6, 2:12).

A godly mother is one who thinks before she speaks.
(Your words have a greater impact than you realize)
Before you sold your children, think.
Before you slander your husband, think.
(never belittle him in front of your children)

C. PURITY (v. 5b)

"Chaste" = pure, holy in mind and body.

A godly mother is a holy mother because God is holy. "Be ye holy for I am holy."

Purity should permeate all areas of one's life -
--Purity in thought (beware of TV and media)
--Purity in speech (Her speech is pure)
--Purity in deed (actions)
An immodest or vulgar mother is an embarrassment to the children and a shame to the testimony of Christ.
I Tim. 5:22 - "Keep thyself pure."

D. HOMEMAKER (v. 5c)

"Keepers at home" = home worker

"Oikourgous" - from "oikos" - home
"ergon" - work

I Tim. 5:14 - "I will therefore, that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully."

"In a Jewish household, the married woman had to grind flour, bake, launder, cook, nurse children, make the beds, spin wool, keep the house, and was also responsible for hospitality and the care of guests." (Reinecker, p. 654).

The #1 task for a mom at home is to instruct her children in the Word of God.
Note the example of Eunice - Timothy's mother (SEE: Acts 16:1; II Tim. 1:5, 3:14, 15).
The problems of working women: Working women are a prime cause for:
1) Inflation
2) Child delinquency
3) Extra-marital affairs

Working at home pays best!

At home, you will find:

a.	The best working conditions -	no cursing; no womanizers.
b.	The best salary -	a contented, secure, stable family
c.	The best fringe benefits -	peace of mind, grateful children, a grateful husband
d.	The best retirement plan -	the approval of God - "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

A godly woman makes her home a haven, a refuge, a shelter --a wonderful place to come home to.

E. GOODNESS (v. 5d)

"Good" - to be "good" is to be like God, for "there is none good (intrinsically) but one, that is God." (Mt. 19:17)

Any goodness we have comes from God, so we must go to God to get it!

The virtuous woman will do her husband "good and not evil all the days of her life" (Prov. 31:12).
"Goodness" involves kindness.
As someone has stated in practical terms, "Kindness bends down to smell the flower in a child's outstretched hand. Kindness waits patiently in bustling grocery lines and speaks a word of encouragement to a weary checker. Kindness touches the discouraged with gentle words of hope."
All of us are commanded to be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32).

F. SUBMISSIVENESS (v. 5e)

"Obedient" = lit. "submit yourself" - a military term meaning to rank yourself under, or to take your place.

The word means to take your place under the authority and leadership of someone else.

"Submission" does not imply inferiority of essence, but difference in function.
Ex: Submission and headship in the Godhead (I Cor. 11:3).
Ex: Differences in function in the military, NFL, and on the job.

"To their own husbands" - It is a shame to see how submissive some ladies are to their boss at work, and the unsubmissive attitude they then show at home.

ILLUS: A doctor at the clinic gave some instructions to a nurse, who nodded and replied, "OK, you're the boss!" Then she laughed and said, "I don't even say that to my husband!"
A godly, wise, mature woman once said: "I realize my submission to my husband is not my gift to him, nor is it to be a subtle form of blackmail ("Lord, see how submissive I was? Now, where are some results?")

Submission is simply a matter of obedience for the Lord's sake!
The reason why a woman will not submit to her husband is because she will not submit to Christ.

CONCLUSION:

Why is it so important that you be a godly mother?
The answer is at the end of verse 5. - "That the word of God be not blasphemed."
The world is watching you. More than that, your children are watching you. If they reject Christ because of your inconsistent life, you will answer to God for that.

Today, our society has its priorities all out of whack.
One evidence of such is the big push for a cleaner ecology and the preservation of wildlife. They worry about the extinction of the whale, the bald eagle, and the elephant, etc., yet overlook the most endangered species on earth. The old (rather, "old-fashioned") species called the Mother is today an endangered species. A real mother. A godly mother. "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies" (Prov. 31:10).

Ladies, will you determine today to let God make you into a Godly mother?

B. "A PORTRAIT OF A GODLY MOTHER"

(Selected Scriptures)

If God were to paint a picture of a Godly mother, what would she look like?

God's portrait of a Godly mother would include the following features:

1. **Loving EYES** **(Proverbs 4:3)**

2. **A Scripture-filled MOUTH** **(Proverbs 31:26)**

3. **A Kind TONGUE** **(Proverbs 31:26)**

4. **Edifying HANDS** **(Proverbs 14:1; 31:13)**

5. **A Strong BACK and Strong ARMS (Proverbs 31:17)**

6. **Bent KNEES** **(Example of Hannah - I Samuel 1:27)**

7. **A Gentle SPIRIT** **(I Peter 3:3-4)**

8. **Modest DRESS** **(I Timothy 2:9)**

9. **Lengthy HAIR** **(I Corinthians 11:15)**