

Understanding My Children

Nurturing Children or Raising Cain?

(This series of lessons was compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources and many teachers over a period of thirty years. The compiler is very grateful for their wisdom.)

Introduction:

A. Psalm 127:3-5; Eph. 6:4

1. "Men are generally more careful of the breed and care of their horses and dogs than of their children." (William Penn)
2. "How can it be an important career to teach other people's children about mathematics, and a small career to tell one's own children about the world around them? A woman's function is laborious, not because it is minute, but because it is gigantic. I will pity mother for the hugeness of her task; I will never pity her for its smallness." (G.K. Chesterton)

B. Adults intuitively know that there is a Divinely generated link between love and discipline in raising children.

1. Children instinctively look for it just as an infant roots around for his mother's breast.
2. 1Thes. 2:7-8, 11-12; Heb. 12:5-6, 10-11

C. Children are our inheritance from God – Psalm 127:3

1. As parents, the greatest blessing we will ever give our children is to give them back to God - Gen. 18:19; 1Sam. 1:22, 2:11

D. God as the eternal Father in heaven understands the needs of children more than any man ever will. Listen to Him

I. DIVINE GUIDANCE IN UNDERSTANDING MY CHILDREN

A. Insist that your children obey your instructions – Eph. 6:1-3

1. "The thing that impresses me the most about America is the way parents obey their children." (King Edward VIII, 1894 - 1972)
2. "There was a time when we expected nothing of our children but obedience, as opposed to the present, when we expect everything of them but obedience." (Anatole Broyard)

a. Prov. 30:1, 29:15

3. Jesus and His parents – Luke 2:51
4. Eli and his sons – 1Sam. 2:12, 22-24, 3:13

B. Praise; don't just punish

1. If you must punish, make the punishment fit the offense.
2. Punishment without praise will break a child's spirit – Col. 3:21
3. Be fair-minded and just, by God's standards and the examples of successful parents, not by your own opinion

C. Give them what they need, not necessarily what they want – Matt. 7:8-11

1. "It is not giving children more that spoils them; it is giving them more to avoid confrontation. (John Gray, "Children Are From Heaven")
2. Say "yes" every time when you can and "no" every time when you must.

D. Be Consistent

1. In teaching and correction; follow through and stay in control

2. Practice what you preach - 2Tim. 1:5
- E. Do not show favoritism – Gen. 26:28; 37:3.
 1. Favoritism caused suffering and sorrow in every Bible family that practiced it
 - a. Abraham - Isaac over Ishmael
 - b. Isaac - Esau over Jacob
 - c. Jacob - Joseph over his brothers
 - d. David - Absalom and Adonijah
 2. Recognize and respect individuality among your children while remaining impartial in your treatment of them
- F. Work together – Gen. 27:5
 1. Children sense conflict between parents and are adept at exploiting it
 - a. Matt. 12:25
 2. Support and help each other with the children, the home, etc.
- G. Find and develop each child's "way" – Prov. 22:6.
 1. Don't try to make him/her into what you wanted to be, but did not become. Parents who live vicariously through their children exploit them
 2. Encourage individuality without abandoning what is right
 - a. Encouraging a child's interest in music and art is good; arranging for them to learn dance is sin
 - b. Encouraging energy and ambition is good; allowing them to run rampant is sin
 3. Give direction and discipline fit for each – Ecc. 2:3, 5:18-19, 12:1
 - a. Each child may need different kinds of discipline, depending on his response - Jude 22-23
 4. "The art of mothering is to teach the art of living to children."
- H. Set godly examples – Isa. 39:4; Prov. 4:1-4; 2Tim. 1:5
 1. Love God - Matt. 22:37 - Obey, worship, put Him first, etc.
 2. Love man - Matt. 22:39 - Honesty, fairness, kindness, mercy, etc.
- I. Pray for God's Help – Judges 13:8-9; James 1:5-8; Phil. 4:6-7
 1. Rely on God's truth to direct you – Prov. 3:5-6
- J. Be Patient
 1. Start early in life – 2Tim. 3:15 (Hannah & Samuel; Jochebed & Moses).
 2. Stay the course – Prov. 19:18, 23:13-14, 29:15
- K. Repent and confess when you sin against your children – James 5:16
 1. Parents can sin against their children - Col. 3:21
- L. Remember that the responsibility and accountability is yours.
 1. Seek counsel – Titus 2:4; Prov. 11:14, 15:22
 2. Filter the well-meaning advice, suggestions, recommendations of others through the sieve of truth and wisdom.
 3. Beware of intrusive meddlers and meddling – 1Peter 4:15
 4. Everyone is an expert: "Before I got married I had six theories bringing up children; now I have six children and no theories." (John Wilmot)

II. A WORD ON DISCIPLINE - Eph. 6:4

- A. It is for instruction – Prov. 1:8-9

1. Teach about life; teach word of God - Deut. 4:8-10, 6:4-9, 11:18-19
 2. Training in righteousness - 2Tim. 3:15
- B. Correction – Prov. 3:12, 13:24, 22:15, 29:17
- C. It is not to silence the children so a selfish parent can have it his way.

Conclusion:

- A. Children deserve our careful attention
- B. Use God's word, not human theories, to teach us to train up our children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord"