

BUILDING A BIBLICALLY STRONG FAMILY "Part II: Rearing Our Children Biblically"

Introduction: (To show the need...)

(1) According to the September 5, 1994 issue of the Torrington Register-Citizen, a non-profit, non-partisan research organization, Child Trends, Inc., has found that besides family finances, the two biggest challenges facing today's American family are (a) combating negative peer pressure on children and (b) maintaining parental control as children grow older.

(2) Douglas Erlandson writes in his article, "Ministering to the Parents of Prodigals," in Confident Living, p. 6 that parents tend to handle such problems by going to one of two extremes. "Either they become preachy or they fail to confront at all..."

(3) The results of handling such challenges this way are disastrous according to Lola Williams, a pastor's wife from Palm Bay, Florida. In the same magazine under the article, "Keeping Them In Church," she writes: "If parents are too strict, they may stifle personality and quash God-given creativity. They could end up with either an openly rebellious youth or an outwardly pliant but inwardly seething antagonist. On the other hand, when a child is continually permitted to have his way, it becomes difficult for him to act constructively... If he cannot have what he wants when he wants it, he finds life's problems overwhelming."

(4) That's all well and good, but HOW does a parent escape being too strict or too lenient when circumstances dictate that something more than what the experts suggest is needed? Case in point: According to the September 12 Register-Citizen, The University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System recommends that if a child scribbles on a wall, his parents need to give him paper and crayons and redirect his behavior! Well, what if a child concludes under such a parental practice that every time he wants paper and crayons, he just has to scribble on a wall until the whole house is scribbled up one side and down the other and the bank decides it is time to foreclose on the mortgage due to the destruction?! What's a parent to do **then**??!

(5) Many parents and their prodigals hurt over mutual estrangements from one another. The question often asked in such cases, is: "Where do we go from here? Is there a solution after-the-fact?"

(We turn to the "Need" section of the sermon...)

Need: "In facing the challenges of negative peer pressure and the fearful loss of parental control as children grow older, what is a parent to do to raise his child well? If we've already made mistakes and we're dealing with after-the-fact troubles -- what's next?!"

- I. **As we noted in this message's "Introduction" notes, a parent errs in raising his child by going into two opposite, damaging extremes: these are (1) being too strict and/or (2) being too lenient !**
- II. **These two extremes are either the results of a PARENT'S sin nature or his ignorance of godly parenting!**
 - A. Paul describes the Sin Nature with its following attributes that express being too strict: hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions and factions! (Galatians 5:19-21 NIV) The **rest** of these Sin Nature attributes (as follows) come from being too slack: immorality, impurity, debauchery, idolatry, witchcraft, drunkenness, and orgies, Galatians 5:19-21 NIV. When a parent is governed by his Sin Nature, he can **vacillate** between both unsound extremes, becoming inconsistent. That only creates problems as it exasperates the child in opposition to Ep. 6:4's command to fathers!
 - B. On the other hand, mere ignorance caused by omitting God's input can cause parenting failure, Pr. 1:20-33!
- III. **A parent thus begins good parenting by addressing his own sin :**
 1. A parent first believes in Christ to be forgiven and to be fitted to live by the Spirit's control, Jn. 3:16; Rom. 8:9; Gal. 5:16-23.
 2. As such, he **retains** this behavior control by (a) confessing any sins he does as a believer as soon as he commits them (1 Jn. 1:9); (b) Then by relying upon the Spirit to produce God's parental demeanor blend for **BOTH** drawing **SENSIBLE** boundaries **AND** expressing **UNCONDITIONAL** love to his child, he (c) obeys Scripture with lasting, blessed **RESULTS**, Gal. 5:16-23; 1 Jn. 2:3.
 3. In this position, the parent can obtain God's help by prayer for rearing problems beyond his control, 1 Jn. 3:22; 5:14f; Jas. 5:16.
- IV. **God's Word then offers the following general guidance for the Spirit-controlled parent to follow to raise the child well:**
 - . In Proverbs 22:6, God shows that one may successfully be used to **guide** a child into proper adulthood:
 1. We paraphrase the Hebrew: "Place tart date palm oil on a newborn infant's palate (to augment the infant's natural suckling tendency for good nursing), and when he is old, he will not depart from it."
 2. As an infant instinctively suckles when hungry, God has put within each child a **bent** to arrive at God's destiny for him.
 3. His parent's job is to augment the child's **preordained bent without creating one for him** so that he can find **God's will**. Failure by a parent to do this only creates rearing problems!
 - A. God presents the **way** to guide the child en route: (Gn. 18:19; Ep. 6:4)

1. God said that Abraham would teach his children rules (*asah*) and decision-making (*shaphat*) based on knowing those rules.
2. A **young** child needs to be taught what the rules are en route to God's destiny for him. Yet his parent must shift in time to delegate to him decision-making based upon the rules !
3. In this process, the parent must discipline by even spanking the very **young** child* (*paideia* of Ep. 6:4 and Pr. 29:15; 23:13-14; 13:24). **Discipline then gradually shifts from spanking unto giving both negative and positive verbal admonitions** (*nouthesia*), Ep. 6:4 (Trench, Synonyms of the N.T., p. 111-114)!

V. **However, some parents have already experienced pain by not following God's parenting route. God offers a solution as follows:**

- . When Auca Indians killed five missionaries in 1955 because of their acquired hatred against white rubber plantation men who abused them, they were still disciplined by the martyrs' widows! Thus, callused prodigals can be **won back** by using the "Missionary Approach!"
- A. We use Paul's example of the "Missionary Approach" as follows:
 1. Give the prodigal unconditional love, Rom. 9:1-3.
 2. Abandon behavior that offends the prodigal, 1 Cor. 10:31-33.
 3. Only when God pushes must we confront him, Acts 18:5f.
 4. If we must thus confront, always hold our ground, A. 18:5f, 19.
 5. If the prodigal makes **any** progress, nourish it, Acts 19:1-7.
 6. Instead of attempting it ourselves, let God build our credibility with the prodigal, Acts 19:11ff.
 7. Whenever he comes to believe in us, we can isolate him from bad peer pressure for total discipling, Acts 19:9.

Concluding Application: Whether we are starting out to parent or whether we have run into problems, the answer is still the same: we parents need Christ as explained above to see God's blessing!

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message...)

(1) Mike Royko of The Chicago Tribune wrote an article on the tragic, short life of Robert Sandifer. At age eleven, this Chicago slums youth who was suspected of murder himself became a murder victim at age 11. Just when the courts were trying to figure out if he should be tried for murder at age eleven, he was killed by another youth.

Mike looked at the hopeless anxiety this world offers for such trouble. (a) Robert's father sadistically used him for a human ashtray. His mother was a drug user. In spite of the fact that neither parent was worthy to become one, nothing in our society could keep such people from producing Robert in the first place. That would violate parental rights. (b) Mike Royko then looked at the legal system and found that so many laws inhibit the abuse of human rights that social agencies, judges and police officials would not have been allowed to rescue Robert Sandifer from his home prior to his death unless they could prove terrible cause. (c) The political system will not solve such needs due to problems in politics. (d) As for the violence in our American media that is blamed for urging Robert Sandifer onto his tragic end, efforts to squelch its "entertainment" would go into legal appeals lasting another 100 years! Mike Royko finished his article, saying, "So we can mourn the short and sad life of Robert...wait a few days for a new shocking headline and start all over again."

(2) On the other hand, a Christian school teacher in our area was once given a class of very difficult, special problem children. The administration felt that this teacher's demeanor was suitable to teaching such children, and other teachers would find the children too stressful.

The teacher reported to me that when things got especially bad in the classroom that just looking to the Lord in a brief prayer was all that was needed and each step for handling the problems became clear.

Other colleagues would corner this teacher and ask, "How are you doing in there?!" The teacher would reply, "Oh, fine!" This would usually elicit a question as to HOW such a class could be handled without causing a personal stress attack. This teacher would respond, "Well, on my way to school, I pray to God for His help for the day!" The rest is history!!

Jesus Christ can solve the Robert Sandifer tragedies if America's overseers of such children will only look unto Him!