

GOD'S RENEWAL FOR HOUSEHOLDS

"Part XXI: Renewing Household Families: Successful Child Rearing - Adjusting To Childhood Development Stages"

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) It is no secret that our older youth, those about to enter adulthood, do not have it easy in life. Note the following statistics on Connecticut's teens made from a state survey late last year:

(a) 12 percent of Connecticut's seventh-grade girls reported attempting suicide in the past year. By the ninth grade, the number rises to 14 %.

(b) 28 percent of Connecticut's 11th-graders reported being drunk one or more times in the past week.

(c) 25 percent of Connecticut's high school students said they smoked cigarettes daily or weekly.

(d) More than 30 percent of Connecticut's high school students shoplifted last year.

(e) 50 percent of all of Connecticut's 11th-graders report having already had sexual intercourse.

(f) 33 percent of Connecticut teens reported having a serious personal, emotional or mental health problem last year where the national average is 20 to 25 percent! (Hartford Courant, "Survey on state's teens shows disturbing trends," Nov. 15, 1996 issue by Courant Staff Writer, Valerie Finholm)

(2) On top of this, many a teen and many a parent of a maturing child either in his early teens or late teens and even twenties has opened up to me or Nadine or members of our Church Board often at the point of tears in frustration and consternation on handling problems related to the age.

Question: Is there a pathway out of the "decline" of "well-being" in adolescent youth as Dr. Michael Resnick, director of the National Adolescent Health Resource Center in Minneapolis put it in addressing the unique needs of Connecticut teens?!

What can trouble parents, what can troubled youth DO?!

(We turn to the sermon's "Need" section . . .)

Need: "Getting my children in EARLY childhood to understand and obey what is right is simple compared to what happens when they begin to 'mature'! Is it ME or WHAT, but what just HIT me?!"

- I. **There is a CONCISE format that God has for godly parents to follow INSTEAD OF the WRONG model in handling children:**
 - A. **Parents** (*pateres* = both parents, not just fathers (cf. Heb. 11:23 with Ex. 2:1-15)) are to **stop** the wrong practice of frustrating their children to anger (*may parogidzo*), Eph. 6:4a (pres. impv. with subj. negation)!
 - B. To **do** so, they must use God's parenting method as follows (4b,c,d):
 1. They are to **nurture** their children (*ektrepho*), Ephesians 6:4b.
 2. They are to do so in **God's basic, rule-training** (*paideia*), 6:4c.
 3. They must **shift** from **basic** rules to **admonition by reason** in **later** childhood (*nouthesia*) Trench, Syn. of the N.T., p. 113-114 (6:4d).
- II. **This sermon deals ONLY with ADMONITION by REASON in LATER CHILDHOOD: Scripture gives insight on this as follows:**
 - A. The word *nouthesia*, "admonition" (KJV) in Eph. 6:4d, is "admonition by **word**" as "the . . . **prevailing**" focus, and it **gradually replaces** *paideia* (basic, rule-training) "when years advance, and there is no longer a child, but a young man, to deal with", Ibid., Trench, p. 113.
 - B. Obviously, this parenting method **shift** must be performed in **degrees** agreeing to the maturation level of each child, and these levels are:
 1. **Early Childhood** (infancy to 5 years) - play-centered, inquisitive; needs outside control from the parent, and instruction on what is right and wrong, with basic rule-training as predominant.
 2. **Middle Childhood** (ages 6 to 11) still needs controls, but becomes goal oriented and latches onto heroes and examples. He needs to begin to be told the whys behind various rules.
 3. **Early Teens** (ages 12, 13-14) physical and chemical changes occur; fleeting but intense idealism; restless; sensitive; the parents need to keep themselves on an even keel with **fathers** taking a leading role in helping the youth begin to make good judgments on his own.
 4. **Late Teens - Young Adulthood** (ages 15-24) self-achievement, greater selectivity in friends, reason increasingly takes precedence over emotions. Parents must be **steady**, giving high goals but keeping expectations reasonable to allow for hands-on experiments!
 - C. To show **HOW** to make the **shift**, we have Gen. 18:19 and Ps 78:

1. Step One - God revealed that Abraham would rear his children well as the **result** of personal **fellowship** with God ("For I **know** (*yada*) him (KJV) [the NIV's "chosen" is not lexically correct; it was **theologically** supplied!]). This implies the fellowship with God that comes today by (a) faith in Christ for salvation from sin (Jn. 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:17) followed by (b) depending on the Spirit who indwells the believer (Gal. 5:16-23) (c) so he can obey Scripture for divine blessing, 1 John 2:3-6; 3:22. [Note how this step corresponds to the last sermon's insight that, due to sinful depravity in the parent and child, rearing children well is **impossible** without divine involvement! (Rom. 3:23; Jer. 17:9; Isa. 53:6)]
2. Step Two - Thus equipped, Abraham would (a) **START** rearing each child in "justice" (KJV), or, (*tsadiq*) = "basic, rule-training". However, (b) he would **also** train them in "judgment" (KJV), or "making judgments" (*mishpat*) that are **based on** established rules! Ps. 78 shows us **how** that occurs as the Psalmist "rears" his readers!
 - a. The Psalmist, Asaph calls his readers to heed his instruction, 1-3.
 - b. He said his lesson was to be retold to future generations, 4a, 6.
 - c. This practice was **God's** Biblical will as Asaph pointed out, 5.
 - d. Accordingly, Asaph **practiced** this decree by narrating the blessings and cursings of the Mosaic Covenant and **applied** it to **his** generation: (a) Asaph tells of the tribe of Ephraim's loss of current blessing in some conflict it had encountered as a failure to heed the Lord, Ps. 78:9-11. (b) Then, he detailed the events in Israel's history where **former** generations had experienced a wide variation in divine blessing corresponding to each generation's obedience level, 78:12-64. (c) God in grace was always willing to restore the people, and God had **recently** blessed Israel with decent leadership in giving Israel King **David**, Ps. 78:65-71. (d) **Accordingly, Asaph told HIS generation that THEY had a new chance to gain God's blessing if they THEMSELVES obeyed God under David's reign, 78:72!** In other words, Asaph handed the baton of responsibility to his generation and in effect said, "**All right, now that YOU are in the driver's seat of life as adults, WHAT will it BE?**"
3. Step Three - When everything else has been said and done, pray, **pray, pray, PRAY!!** (Jas. 5:16b)

Lesson Application: *As we learned last time that the parent is inadequate apart from God's involvement in rearing SMALL children, he is LESS adequate for rearing MATURING offspring! Thus, (1) salvation in Christ and (2) control by the Lord are absolute necessities for ministering effectively to growing children!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

(1) Dr. Michael Resnick whom we quoted in our introduction as reporting on the decline in well-being of Connecticut's teens noted in last November 15's Hartford Courant article that some "protective factors" tend to "pull young people back from the abyss". These are:

(a) "' ... the presence of at least one caring adult.'" "If not a mom and dad it can be a teacher, coach, older sibling, reliable adult in the neighborhood ...frequently the parent of their best friend."

(b) "' . . . a strong sense of connection to schools ...'"

(c) "An often overlooked area of importance is giving teenagers a sense of **spirituality** -- "That sense of connection to that awe and mystery in the world." [Faith in Christ makes a difference!]

(d) "Finally, he urged parents not to give up. "Teens are very good at giving us the message that we are irrelevant to their lives. 'As parents, we make the mistake of ... believing them.'"

Newsweek, John McCormick and Sharon Begley interviewed Tiger Woods' **parents** with some tell-tale insight on Tiger's success. One of the characteristics about him that makes Tiger Woods so respected by other golfers is that even though he makes a **bad** shot, unlike many other golfers, it doesn't rattle his game, but often makes Tiger even **better!** That's because of the input of his **parents**. Mrs. Kultida Woods used to watch television with Tiger, and when Jimmy Connors or John McEnroe would throw a tennis racket in disgust at their failure, Mrs. Woods would turn to Tiger and say, "I don't want you to ruin my reputation as a parent. I will spank you in a minute if you act like that." Mr. Earl Woods would respond when his boy banged his golf club in practice, asking Tiger, "Who is responsible for that bad shot? That crow that made noise during your backswing? Your golf ball's lie? Whose responsibility was that?" Tiger would respond, "Mine, Daddy!" Thus, he learned through this guidance not to **waste** his frustration banging his club, but to **use** it as motivation to excel on the **next** hole!

By God's grace, we as parents can be effectively used of God to parent even MATURING **offspring with RESULTS!**