

GOD'S RENEWAL FOR HOUSEHOLDS

"Part XIX: Renewing Household Families: Successful Child Rearing - Effective Child Nurture"

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Michael P. Green, Th. M, Ph. D. reported in the Autumn 1989 issue of Dallas Seminary's Kindred Spirit a story of a professor who frequently delivered a talk titled, "Ten Commandments for Parents." After his first child he changed the title to "Seven Principles for Parents." When two more children came along, he revised the title to become, "Three Suggestions for Parents." Finally, when his children became teens, he quit lecturing altogether!

The fact is, parenting, helping a child along the route from infancy to productive adulthood is a HUGE task today! Consider:

(a) Dr. James Dobson's November 1966 newsletter from Focus on the Family reported on an article published in the August 19, 1996 issue of The Weekly Standard entitled, "Gay-Ed for Tots." It described a pro-homosexual curriculum for kindergartners and first-graders in the San Francisco Unified School District! It is promoted by the district's Support Services for Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Youth Department!

(b) On the other hand, he noted that in contrast, the Supreme Court of the United States has ruled that the Ten Commandments, the backbone of our Judeo-Christo-American heritage cannot be posted in America's public schools (Stone v. Graham, 449 U. S. 39 (1980)).

(c) The Barna Research Group has found that 75% of all adults reject the notion that there are absolute moral truths. Thus, suicide is now viewed as just one of many viable choices available to healthy, functional young people. Drug abuse has risen 106% among teens in the last five years, and 82 percent of all young people will have had sex before the age of 19, before marriage with all the dangers of AIDS infection and emotional chaos in our society. (George Barna, Generation Next, p. 31)

(c) In view of this pressure, Dr. Dobson reports that he receives letters, e-mail and phone calls from children and teens that reveal the enormous pressures they face.

How can a parent starting out with young children today ever get them **to become fulfilled, vibrant, healthy, mature and godly adults in our time, in our culture?! Where do they BEGIN?!**

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

Need: "We really want our children to turn out well as adults! Yet, it seems so overwhelming a job to get them safely and SANELY to that goal! Is there a simple directive from God for us to follow?!"

I. **There is a CONCISE format 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 follow God's approach to parenting as follows:
 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 (6:4d).

II. **This sermon deals with NURTURING alone: to NURTURE and not FRUSTRATE the child, parents can follow the Proverbs 22:6 model which we use with complementary human advice as follows:**

- A. Proverbs 22:6 in the Hebrew text challenges parents to "rub date palm oil on a newborn's palate" (C. Swindoll, a chapel message, DTS, '75).
- B. This act **accentuated** a newborn infant's **natural** bent to suck as the date palm oil was so **tart**, equipping him to **nurse vigorously**. Then, putting the child on the mother's breast, the newborn would vigorously nurse, giving him his needed immunity from disease & proteins via the mother's few, early, post-natal days of mammary colostrum secretion!
- C. Using Scripture together with compatible wise, educated, current human advice, we can briefly expand on various child-nurturing steps:
 1. Item One - Provide a stable, godly **marriage before** having a child!
 - a. The newborn and mother in Pr. 22:6 mean a father exists as well, the start of a cohesive, godly **marital** backdrop for the newborn!
 - b. Newsweek, 6/8/92, p. 19-22, states that statistics have shown social experts that "There is a high correlation between disrupted homes and just about every social problem imaginable."

- c. Thus, work on the marriage through a proper relationship with Christ (Jn. 3:16) and obedience to Scripture (Ep. 5:18; 6:1-4) if we want the best for our child! (Copies are available of our recent sermon series on Renewed Household Marriages!)
 2. **Item Two** - Start nurturing the child as **soon** as he is **born**!
 - a. Proverbs 22:6 addresses the need for a responsible adult to put the newborn on the breast at **birth** to obtain the few days of priceless maternal **colostrum** he needs for **lifelong** health!
 - b. Newsweek, April 28, '97 ("Teach Your Parents Well") reports specialists find that "The foundations of social, emotional and intellectual development are all laid in the first 10 years of life."
 - c. The same report concluded: "By the age of **three** years, children who have heard many words and more positive experiences score higher on standardized tests" than other children.
 - d. Studies in the 1970s of hardened criminals at the Texas State Penitentiary found that these inmates were **set** in their errant behavior patterns by the age of **two** years old!
 3. **Item Three** - We must spend time with the child to **know** his needs.
 - a. Pr. 22:6 begins with the assumption that parents **know** the newborn's needs, and that he needs to nurse **early**, and that he has an instinct given by God for him to **nurse by sucking**!
 - b. Thus, authorities urge the need to **know** a child to **nurture** him: Newsweek, May 12, '97 ("The Myth of Quality Time") has experts urging working parents to carve out more time for their children than is nationally done, for "You can't raise them in short, scheduled bursts. They need **lots** of attention."
 4. **Item Four** - Live life **interactively** with a child to nurture him well.
 - a. A comprehensive physical, emotional and mental interaction on the mother's part with her newborn is taught in Prov. 22:6!
 - b. Likewise, Newsweek, April, 28, '97 reports from experts: "The size of a toddler's vocabulary reflects how much the mother **talks** to him." **Reading** to a small child fosters a fondness for reading that leads to later academic skills. Playing a musical instrument **before** age **10** develops powers for **math** skills!
 5. **Item Five** - Integrate our walk with God in living with the child.
 - a. In reading to the child, read Bible stories and apply them to life!
 - b. Don't **send**, but **TAKE** the child to church functions/ministries!
 - c. In praying, let the child pray his own prayer with the parents!

Concluding Application: *To modify a contemporary saying, "It takes the CREATOR of the villagers to raise a child!" Parents must (1) trust in Christ to become sons of God (Jn. 3:16), being thus equipped with the indwelling Holy Spirit for their own behavior control, Rom. 8:9b. (2) Then they must (a) confess personal sins (1 Jn. 1:9) for (b) empowerment to control their own temperaments (Gal. 5:16-23) in order to (c) heed Scripture on FIRST nurturing a child instead of frustrating him to wrath, Eph. 6:4; Prov. 22:6!*

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

One of the members of our Church teaches in an area public school district. This past academic year, she was given the uncherished task of teaching a class consisting of the most troubled, academically dehydrated third grade children in the district simply because no other teacher could handle them!

er attended her class, adding to the burden of her teaching responsibilities. It looked like the typical teacher's nightmare in the making!

Best in each of the children.

Sane with the group, would periodically ask her how she was getting along! She would respond, "Well, fine!" and in a non-preachy way relate how her dependence upon God helped guide her in the teaching process. What these young, troubled children needed most was someone willing to try **nurturing** whenever possible, and that in the power that the indwelling Holy Spirit offered! Their admirable response revealed as much!

America's children and teens -- OUR children and teens -- are in need of true NURTURING, the kind that godly parents can offer through their own personal relationship to Christ, and through following the basic principles taught in Proverbs 22:6! Let's not let them down, but trust the Lord for the mind and attitude needed to accomplish this feat!