

Children In The Home

Introduction. The first recorded command which appears in the Bible and is directed toward newly-formed humanity has reference to children. Genesis 1:26 tells of God's intentions of making man in the image and likeness of the Godhead. Genesis 1:27 reveals the accomplishment of this amazing feat. Genesis 1:28 gives man his great duty of populating a world which was made to be inhabited by humanity.

This command includes the conception, birth, and rearing of children. Children are frequently conceived and born when there is no marriage relationship between the father and mother, but these circumstances are a violation of God's will and have been proven to be a staggering blow to the future welfare of our society.

Children who are not reared to respect God and honor their parents can be a source of heavy heartache. Some of the saddest Christians you speak to are those whose children have forsaken the Lord. Real parental love will never cease caring for a wayward child and will always hope for their return to the Lord. By following some of the godly principles outlined here, parents can greatly increase their chance of having spiritually-minded, godly children.

I. ***What Parents Owe Their Children***

- A. We need to address this aspect of the parent-child relationship first for two reasons: (1) The parents realize what they owe a child before he or she realizes what they owe to their parents; and, (2) the degree to which parents fulfill their obligations to their child will have a decided effect in how well the children later fulfill their obligations.
- B. Children deserve to be wanted, loved, and respected. The term "tragedy" is too weak a term to describe the birth of an unwanted child. From the moment of conception to the hour of birth, each child should be wanted (Numbers 11:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:7). When you look at Abraham and Sarah, Elkanah and Hannah, and Zacharias and Elizabeth, you see parents who wanted their children. When parents fail to want and love their children, the word of God is blasphemed (Titus 2:4-5; 2 Timothy 3:3). Children are gifts from God and deserve to be loved and respected as God's greatest gifts (Psalm 127:3-4).
- C. Children deserve to be trained and disciplined for life and eternity. We have previously discussed spiritual training by fathers and mothers, but more general training is also needed. Many children never know the rod of correction or a single "No" directed toward their wishes (Proverbs 13:24; 22:6; Ephesians 6:4). Many parents could care less what their children do, where they go, with whom they associate, and what time they check in at night. It is unfair to allow children to grow

up in such a permissive atmosphere and be left to make decisions that are above and beyond their capability.

- D. Children deserve parents who will take time for them. Parents and children are together for only a short time and the years speed by so quickly (Psalm 78:39; 90:10). Parents and children should spend time together rather than being too engrossed in life and work.

II. ***What Children Owe Their Parents***

- A. Children should be obedient and respectful to parents. Young people cannot successfully imitate Jesus unless they are obedient and respectful to parental authority (Luke 2:51-52). If Jesus could not afford to disobey His parents during His youth, then no young person today can afford to either. If Jesus had despised parental authority in His youth, He could not have made such advancement in gaining God's approval and man's favor. Being obedient to parents is a commandment (Ephesians 6:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:2).
- B. Children should honor, love, and care for their parents. The obligation to love and respect parents is a lifetime requirement (Exodus 20:12). Children must realize that the opportunity to express love and concern to parents can quickly pass forever. Children need to love and brighten the hearts of their parents while their ears can still hear their voice and their eyes can still read their letters. Children must also bear the responsibility of care for their parents (John 19:26-27). The Pharisees in Christ's day sought to avoid parental support (Mark 7:9-13). A wonderful form of paying back our parents for all they have done for us is caring for them in older age (1 Timothy 5:4, 8).
- C. Children should strive to be helpful, dependable, and prepared for life. Both mothers and fathers have a full day of work from the time they wake up until they go to bed. Children need to be taught to be helpers (1 Samuel 2:11; 3:1; 20:36; 2 Kings 5:2-3; John 6:9). Children need to learn how to make promises and keep promises (Ecclesiastes 5:2-5). Children finally need to be prepared for providing for a family. This means both secular and practical education. However, never forget that making a life is more important than learning how to make a living.

III. ***What To Teach Our Children***

- A. Seek God's kingdom first (Matthew 6:33; 16:24-26; Joshua 24:15).
- B. Worship God in spirit and truth (Psalm 100:1-5; 122:1; John 4:24).
- C. Maintain moral purity (1 Samuel 1:12-14; 2 Timothy 2:22; Hebrews 11:24-26).
- D. Marry one who will encourage spirituality (1 Kings 21:25; 1 Peter 3:1-7).

- E. Assume responsibility for choices and actions (Ezekiel 18:26; 1 Timothy 5:8).

IV. ***What To Unteach Our Children***

- A. Selfishness (Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 9:23; Galatians 2:20).
- B. Lack of respect for authority (Leviticus 20:9; Proverbs 10:1; 15:5; 19:26; Ephesians 6:1).
- C. Lack of discernment between right and wrong (Proverbs 23:23-24).
- D. Lack of knowledge of the word of God (Judges 13:8, 12; 3 John 4).
- E. Laziness (Proverbs 6:6-11).
- F. Pride (Proverbs 13:1; 15:32; 22:15; Acts 7:20-22).
- G. Worldliness (Matthew 6:13; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Peter 1:12-15).

Conclusion. Great joy can be found in the hearts of parents and children when Christ and the Bible are lifted up in the home. A child's childhood and adulthood can be immeasurably altered by giving them the foundation of a godly home.

Children can follow the example of Andrew and bring a brother to Jesus (John 1:40-42). They can follow Joseph for purity (Genesis 39:9), David for courage (1 Samuel 17:45-46), Josiah for determination (2 Chronicles 34:3), Daniel for loyalty (Daniel 1:8), Timothy for character (Acts 16:1-2; Philippians 2:20-22), and Jesus for everything (Philippians 2:5).