

“Do Not Sin Against The Child”

Introduction. In Genesis 42:22, during Joseph’s brothers first visit to Egypt, Reuben was talking about their selling of Joseph many years ago. He had told his brothers, “Do not sin against the child.”

Psalm 127:3 tells us that children are a blessing. One only has to look at Rebekah and Hannah to see the sorrow of a barren couple. How can we “sin against the child?” Probably the first thought that comes to mind is abortion. In 54 countries (61% of the world population) abortions are legal. There are approximately 46 million abortions conducted each year, which calculates to approximately 126,000 abortions conducted each day. Approximately 1,370,000 abortions occur annually in the U.S.

Although we will not consider the sin of abortion today, how can we “sin against the child” now? We are going to consider four different ways in which this can be done.

I. ***Failure To Provide Discipline And Correction***

- A. The duty of parents is to correct and discipline their children (Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:20-21; Proverbs 22:6; Hebrews 12:5-11). In fact, the scriptures warn of turning away from discipline (Proverbs 13:24; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15).
 1. Dr. Benjamin Spock once said, “I hope American parents can out-grow the conviction ... that physical punishment is necessary to bring up well-behaved children. There are parts of the world where it has never occurred to any adult to strike a child. I have known personally or professionally dozens of families in which the parents never lifted a hand -- or otherwise punished or humiliated their children -- and yet the children were ideally cooperative and polite. Children are eager to be ever more grown up and responsible.”
 2. A survey of parents in the United States shows a drop in the use of spanking as the main disciplinary method from 59% in 1962 to 19% in 1993.
 - a) Parents now prefer using time-outs (38%) and lecturing (24%).
 - b) Several nations actually forbid corporal punishment in the home: Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Latvia, Norway, Sweden, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
 3. Critics of corporal punishment give several reasons for abstaining from spanking. They state that spanking is: ineffective, may trigger criminal, anti-social, violent, aggressive behavior later in life, has been linked to adult depression, can lead to abuse, can unintentionally cause serious physical damage, can train a child to use violence, can lower a child’s IQ, and can create fear in the child. In

fact, one critic even said that a type of force used on a child's back side was a sexual violation!

- B. Some good parents fail to discipline their children.
 - 1. Eli was a priest who had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas (1 Samuel 1:3, 9). Eli was a holy man and dedicated to serving God, but he had no control over his two sons (1 Samuel 2:12-17). His household was brought to ruin because he failed to restrain his sons (1 Samuel 2:30-34; 3:13-14).
 - 2. Samuel's untaught sons, Joel and Abijah, were not much better (1 Samuel 8:1-3).
 - 3. David's failure to discipline his sons resulted in one becoming a rapist (Amnon), another led a rebellion against his father (Absalom) and when Solomon ascended to the throne another tried to revolt against him (Adonijah).
- C. We need to train our children:
 - 1. To respect rights of others.
 - 2. To respect authority.
 - 3. To work -- do not teach them that the world "owes them a living."
 - 4. That none are above the law.

II. ***Failure To Provide A Good Home***

- A. Every child deserves two parents who love each other and love their children.
 - 1. Some children do not know what it is to live in a home where the parents are not constantly yelling at each other and them.
 - 2. Some children live in constant fear that their parents will separate from each other and almost invariably the child will feel it is their fault.
- B. Children's physical needs must be met.
 - 1. The responsibility of the parent is to care for their children (2 Corinthians 12:14; 1 Timothy 5:8).
 - a) Not only must we provide for them, but we must protect them. We should never leave them with people that are unsafe.
 - b) In Carson City, Nevada, two teenagers were severely malnourished because their parents locked them in a bathroom.
 - 2. Many parents fail in this respect because they spend their funds on drugs or alcohol.
- C. Children in stable, godly homes truly flourish.
 - 1. When parents reject each other by divorce or an out-of-wedlock birth that eventually ends in totally separate lives for the father and mother, the strengths of their children are not as developed as they could be, and more weaknesses occur in major outcomes such as deprivations, addictions, abuse and failure.

2. The children of parents who reject each other suffer deep emotional pain, ill health, depression, anxiety, even shortened life span; more drop out of school, less go to college, they earn less income, they develop more addictions to drugs and alcohol and they engage in increased violence or suffer it within their homes.
3. Society also suffers with more gangs, assaults, violence against women and children, sexual abuse of women and children, and much bigger bills for jails, increased need for health care, supplemental education, addiction programs, foster care, homelessness programs and on and on.

III. **Failure To Provide A Good Example**

- A. We are commanded to be a good example.
 1. "Be ye followers of me ..." (1 Corinthians 11:1).
 2. "Leaving us an example ..." (1 Peter 2:21).
 3. "Call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee ..." (2 Timothy 1:5).
- B. Of what do I need to be a good example?
 1. Of a loving mate.
 2. Of a conscientious parent.
 3. Of a faithful Christian (1 Timothy 4:12).
 - a) People need to see good words in us.
 - b) People need to see a faithful manner of life and purity in us.
 - c) People need to see the love of God in us.
 - d) People need to see faith in God in us.

IV. **Failure To Give Instruction About Their Duty To God**

- A. The sin of Israel was that there "arose another generation" (Judges 2:10).
 1. The people were destroyed because of a lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6).
 2. It is not in man to direct his own steps (Jeremiah 10:23).
 3. We have a good example of Timothy's mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 3:15).
- B. How we can teach our children?
 1. By studying with them at home.
 2. By bringing them to classes and worship to receive instruction and see how they are to worship God.
 - a) When mothers and fathers belong to each other and strive to belong to God in worship the greatest strengths emerge and the least problems are present.
 - (1) For example, our government spends a lot of money on education attainment and outcomes.

- (2) The Heritage Foundation reports that children from an intact family that worships God most frequently has the highest Grade Point Average, while children from a fragmented family that worships least or not at all, as a group, has the lowest Grade Point Average.
- b) There is much in scientific literature that points towards religious practice as a great preserver and fosterer of marriage and family strengths.

Conclusion. Our children are our most precious possessions. To fail our children is to fail in one of life's most significant aspects. Parents need to pray for wisdom (James 1:5-7). Parents need to remember who is the boss and not be intimidated by their children, but love and discipline them. Endeavor to bring to the minds of your children the laws of the Lord. Instill in them the love for God that leads to obedience and the fear of sinning that leads to righteousness.