



Northside Proclaimer

Proclaiming The Word Of The Lord

1 Thessalonians 1:8

Northside Church Of Christ Welcomes You!

Feb. 8, 2015

“Training Our Children In The Lord”

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The Bible teaches, “[t]rain up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22.6). There are many truths grounded in this verse that we as parents would do well to examine and learn.

Solomon spoke to the training of a child in the way he should go. To train means, “to educate” (ISBE). One Hebrew lexicon suggests the Hebrew means to educate a child in “manners and habits” (GHCL). Thus, to train up a child is to develop within the child a set of manners and habits. Obviously, these characteristics must be in harmony with God’s character.

God instructed the Israelites, “[y]ou shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise... When your son asks you in time to come, ‘What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the rules that the Lord our God has commanded you?’ then you shall say to your son...the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as we are this day. And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us.” (Deut. 6.5-9; 20-25)

The above passage teaches us the foundation for educating a child in the instruction of the Lord. We must give diligence to this training. The Hebrew words for “teach them diligently” is akin to “sharpen; a sword” (GHCL). Thus, the idea is we must sharpen our children by teaching them. As our children grow, we must give diligent attention to “sharpening the edges” until they reach maturity in Christ.

This will require much time and effort on our part to talk of God’s ways and as we like to say, “walk the talk.” If we aren’t diligent in the area of sharpening, we will consequently be “dulling the edges” instead.

Another aspect of training our children not to depart is discipline. This is our God-given responsibility as the parents. Paul taught, “[f]athers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6.4). Solomon wrote, “[f]olly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him” and “[d]o not withhold discipline from a child...” (Prov. 22.15; 23.13).

God expects this type of discipline to be administered. The Hebrew writer penned, “...[f]or what son is there whom his father does not discipline?” (Heb. 12.7). Consequently, failing to discipline our children is considered a lack of love. God said, “[w]hoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him” (Prov. 13.24). Discipline, therefore, is vital to training a child. He continues, “...[i]f you strike him with the rod, you will save his soul from Sheol [hell]” (Prov. 23.14). Continued on back...

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Next, we must educate our children to love God and His ways. Paul penned, "...abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good" (Rom. 12.9). This is the nature of God. He "...is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1.5). David declared, "[t]hrough your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way" (Psalm 119.104). As godly parents we will strive to teach the nature of God to our children. This nature abhors evil and upholds righteousness. Thus, our children must develop righteous manners and habits in keeping with God's nature.

John wrote, "[a]nyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love" (1 John 4.8). Once we have instilled an appreciation of love in our children, they will not hate, nor will they mistreat. Instead, they will love their heavenly Father and love their fellow man. What will follow is a Christ-like attitude and character. These attributes will create a mindset in the child which will cause them to abstain from every form of evil, commit no wrong to their neighbor and make no provision for the flesh and its desires (1 Thess. 5.22; Rom. 13.10, 14).

Training them in the love of God will also properly set their "conscience compass." What I mean is, if they have been properly trained in accordance with God's Word, this will act as a beacon for them. For instance, if I train my child to steal, it will not bother his conscience. If I educate my child that stealing is wrong, he'll have to fight with his conscience if and when he steals. However, if his manners and habits have been influenced by God's nature and love, the child won't even consider such a shameful outcome.

Finally, the third aspect of educating children is to teach them not to move the landmarks God has set up. The Holy Spirit revealed, "[d]o not move the ancient landmark that your fathers have set" (Prov. 22.28). Landmarks are set and are to never be moved. Job stated, "[s]ome move landmarks; they seize flocks and pasture them" (24.2).

Thus, if children are not to depart from the training and education they have received from the parents, they must remain or abide in God's Word, our landmark. The prophet Jeremiah spoke of the attitude of those who had sought to remove the landmarks of God.

"Thus says the Lord: "Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.' I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Pay attention to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not pay attention.' Therefore hear, O nations, and know, O congregation, what will happen to them. Hear, O earth; behold, I am bringing disaster upon this people, the fruit of their devices, because they have not paid attention to my words; and as for my law, they have rejected it" (6.16-19).

If our children are taught the importance of God's Word from the beginning they will not develop an attitude that rejects His Word, but rather one that embraces it and walks in it. We must understand that this is something that we must train our children to do. He or she will not automatically practice such.

The proverb is not an absolute guarantee since, "...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..." (Rom. 3.23). We can be sure our children will one day sin (cf. James 1.13-15). However, God expects us as parents to train our children to obey His conditions for the forgiveness of their sins. Hence, we teach our children to obey the gospel and to remain, that is, not depart from their faith in Christ. Without this training however, there are no guarantees of obedience! BG

Chronological Bible Reading Plan

- Feb. 8 Ex. 28-29
- Feb. 9 Ex. 30-32
- Feb. 10 Ex. 33-35
- Feb. 11 Ex. 36-38
- Feb. 12 Ex. 39-40
- Feb. 13 Lev. 1-4
- Feb. 14 Lev. 5-7