



*Responsibilities of
Parenthood*

13 Lessons

**Prepared by:
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2007

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Lesson One

"Recognizing the Responsibility of Parenthood"

All parents quickly agree that parenting is a weighty responsibility! However, even though such is demanding, it is also rewarding. It is demanding if done correctly and it is rewarding if done right! While this responsibility is recognized from a common sense standpoint; it is also a responsibility that God has given to parents and the father in particular (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21; Prov. 22:6; Deut. 6:6-9; 1 Tim. 5:8). Others obviously can be involved in the process. In a general way, God wants parents to provide for their physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental well-being. Children have a right to expect of their parents the following basic things:

1. **To be wanted and Loved** (Titus 2:4). A lack of love can be disastrous to the child. They need to be assured by words, looks, and actions that they are wanted and dearly loved.
2. **To be provided with Food, Clothing, and Shelter** (1 Tim. 5:8). Children didn't ask to be brought into this world, the parents made that decision. So, they need to be cared for sufficiently.
3. **To be Taught and Trained correctly** (Eph. 6:4; Prov. 13:24). Training is a real challenge because:
 - a) Each child is an individual and different.
 - b) Each goes through phases of development that needs proper guidance.
 - c) Each need to have their parents say and do the right thing in the training process.

We are often tempted to ask: *"How can children turn out so good with imperfect parents?"*

4. **To have Proper Parental Examples set before them** (1 Tim. 4:12). If it was important for Timothy as a preacher to set the proper example, it surely should be important for parents to set the proper example before their children..... in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, and in purity! Children do not expect perfect parents, but they have a right to expect consistent parents.

THE BENEFITS AND REWARDS OF PROPER PARENTING

Every command from God and every requirement and responsibility that God expects of his creatures—not only have a purpose, but they have benefits. God does not ask us to do something for nothing! He has made us and knows that we move because of desirable motivations that are offered. We believe the same is obviously true of parenting—there are great benefits and rewards when we do our job well as parents. Following are some of the things that can be easily seen as an outcome of proper parenting:

1. **A child generally follows in the way he is trained** (Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4). If we want our children to be faithful in their service to God, we need to train them in such. As a general rule, parents are rewarded by their children walking in that way.

2. We learn some needed lessons for ourselves as well:

- a) We learn to give of ourselves (Phil. 2:3-4).
- b) We learn to put other's before ourselves) (Phil. 2:4).
- c) We learn how to be tender and kind (Rom. 12:10).
- d) We learn the depths of love (Rom. 13:8).
- e) We have meaning and purpose for our lives (Prov. 22:6; 23:13-14).
- f) We are rewarded by the love and adoration of our children (Prov. 29:17).
- g) We are rewarded as we see them succeed in life (Prov. 29:15).
- h) We are rewarded with comfort in our declining years (Prov. 19:26; 17:25, 6).
- i) We can better understand and appreciate God's love for us—His children (1 Jn. 3:1).

WHEN PARENTS FAIL

When parents fail in their "most important work" of raising and training their children, it is obvious that the above benefits and rewards will probably not be there. But there are additional thoughts that can be suggested as well:

- 1. They will often have immature and dependant children** (Heb. 5:12; 6:1-2).
- 2. They will often have irresponsible children** (Prov. 19:15; 6:6-11).
- 3. They will possibly have delinquent children** (Prov. 19:26; 29:15).

In many instances, not only will the parents suffer, but society as well. Where is some of the fault of our jails and prisons being filled with people of disobedience and violence—do the parents of those people have no responsibility? The church also suffers the loss of another soul that could be on their way to heaven.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

When parents bring children into the world, they need to feel keenly the great responsibility that comes into their lives. They need to gladly accept this responsibility. They need to also be thankful for these children, but also for the opportunity that they have to help to teach and train children for eternity. They need to recognize what a great treasure they have in their children (Prov. 17:6; Ps. 127:3-4). They desperately need loving and concerned parents, but parents also need these children as well.

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW

- 1. Should parents accept full responsibility for child rearing?**
- 2. What are some basic benefits of proper Parenting?**
- 3. What are some rewards of proper Parenting?**
- 4. What happens when parents fail in their responsibilities toward children?**
- 5. What do children have a right to expect of parents?**
- 6. What suggestions do you have that will help parents fully realize this responsibility?**
- 7. As a parent or child, has this lesson been helpful to you?**

Lesson Two

"Helping Children to Believe in God"

The greatest blessing that we can give to our children is a true and sincere belief in God! But this belief cannot be handed down like an inheritance or forced on our children against their will. Our challenge is to help them come to this belief on their own convictions—not on ours. It is easy for trusting children to accept the belief of their parents until they are challenged by their peers with doubts and opposing ideas. Sooner or later, their belief must be based on firm evidences. Thus, the challenge of parents is to help them see the evidences, reasons, and logical conclusions about the existence and nature of God. It should be obvious to all who know the Scriptures that faith in God is a necessity in order to go to heaven (Heb. 11:6).

THE BASIS FOR FAITH IN GOD

Since faith in God cannot be handed down from father or mother to son or daughter like we would an inheritance; then, parents must find the basis for faith in God and help their children to see, evaluate, and accept such. The Hebrew writer tells us that faith is based on evidence (11:1)—something tangible, evident, reasonable, and logical. Several passages of Scripture indicate that the Creation and Design of our Universe is a basis for belief in God (Ps. 19:1; 139:14; Rom. 1:18-20; Heb. 3:4). What other conclusion can you draw from the evidence all around us? But ultimately, saving faith comes from believing what the Bible says about God (Rom. 10:17). People can believe in the existence of God without a Bible; but to know what He expects of us, we need a revelation from Him of His Will (2 Tim. 3:14-17; 1 Cor. 2:11). The Bible actually makes this claim about itself. Our children need to know this!

A saving faith in God is something that must be taught, understood, and accepted by an individual (John 6:44-45). They need to be challenged to reason about what they see around them (Ps. 19:1). But, they also need to be continually pointed to the teachings of the Word of God and of its value to their lives (Deut. 6:6-9). God is revealed in the Bible in such a way that even children of the age of accountability can grasp and understand sufficiently in order to be convinced and convicted that God is and He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6). But along with all of this teaching, the parents must show their children that they truly and fully believe in God and show it by their devotion to Him (1 Cor. 11:1). Unless they see this, the child may have a hard time coming to faith in God. The reason should be obvious! Because belief in God and devotion to God and a godly life go hand-in-hand (Matt. 7:21-23; 22:37)!

WHAT TO TEACH ABOUT GOD?

A strongly negative outlook about the God of Heaven can possibly do more harm than good. This does not mean that we present a one-sided view of God in the other direction. Our approach should be one that is balanced and accurate, logical and believable. Too many children

have been turned off and badly affected by a one-sided approach. The movie industry has shown this very vividly as they portray the mentality of such perverted people.

Children need to get the true picture of God early in life so it will cause them to want to seek after God. The following items would seem to be primary:

1. His Great Attributes:

- a) He is Omni-Present—that God is everywhere present—there is no place to go to get out of God's presence (Ps. 139:7-10).
- b) He is Omni-Potent—that God is all-powerful—there is nothing too big for him to deal with (Gen. 1:1).
- c) He is Omniscient—that God is all-knowing—there is nothing hid from His sight or His knowledge (Ps. 147:5).
- d) He is an Infinite Spirit—that God was not created, but has always existed (Ps. 90:1-2).
- e) He is Perpetually the Same—He changes not—He is always the same (Mal. 3:6).
- f) He is Perfect Absolutely—He cannot change for the better—He is already perfect (Ps. 102:24-28). The One true God encompasses all of these great Attributes!

2. His Great Nature:

- a) He is LOVE absolute (1 John 4:16). But He is also a God of Wrath (Rom. 11:22). His Love must not be put in opposition to His Wrath.
- b) He is JUST in all His Acts (Rom. 3:24-26). But He is also a God of Mercy (Eph. 2:4-6). His Mercy must not be put in opposition to His Justness. The one true God's Nature can be all of these, but in complete harmony with each other. Many other terms describe God's Nature, such as: Grace, Longsuffering, Forgiveness, Anger, Reward and Punishment, etc.

3. Teach about the Great Principles behind what He does:

- a) We all need to see the Principles behind what God does!
- b) Look carefully at Obedience versus Disobedience and the outcome of each (Deut. 11:26-28).
- c) Understand God's hatred of sin because of the evil it causes (Ps. 5:4).
- d) That He extends Mercy to sinners who will repent and turn back to Him (Rom. 5:8).
- e) Tell about the desire of God to save man and the extent to which He went to make such possible (Tit. 2:11; 1 Pet. 3:9).
- f) Teach clearly about God's Plan of Salvation (Eph. 3:8-11).
- g) They need to know about the Providence of God (Rom. 8:28ff).
- h) God's steadfastness in dealing with man needs to be emphasized (Ps. 105-109).
- i) They need to know there is a cost involved in serving God (Lk. 14:25-33).
- j) etc.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

It is important that parents find an answer to questions that their children ask about God. They should be encouraged to ask....and then to be challenged to find an answer. Help them to know how to find the answers to their questions. But just as important, they need to see Parents practice what they teach:

1. To show that God is first in their lives (Matt. 6:33).
2. To be involved in good works (Tit. 3:8, 14).
3. To see Parents reading the Bible (2 Tim. 2:15).
4. To see them attend faithfully the assemblies of the saints (Heb. 10:24-25).
5. To see and hear them pray earnestly (1 Thess. 5:17).
6. To see that you love both God and neighbor (Matt. 22:37-40).

May we truly be able to help our children to see God, believe in Him with all their heart, and serve Him faithfully unto death. It is such children that become our joy and crown!

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW

- 1. What is the basis of true faith in God?**
- 2. How do we teach children about God?**
- 3. What do we teach them about God?**
- 4. Where do you feel was your weakness in teaching your children about God?**
- 5. Why is it so important to have a true picture of God?**
- 6. Where do children get their first impression about God?**

Lesson Three

"Helping Children to Believe the Bible to be the Word of God"

Belief in God ultimately comes down to a belief in the Bible as the Word of God (Heb. 4:12; Rom. 10:17). People can believe in a Deity of some kind who created all things and sustains this Universe, but they need the Bible in order to know what God has ordained for us to do to be pleasing to Him. Thus, Parents need to help their children to believe in the Bible as an inspired Revelation from God (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 2:11-13) that is designed to give us the instructions on what we must do to be saved eternally. Parents should impress upon their children that the Bible is truly the "Words of Life" (John 6:68). They need to realize that it is God's truth as opposed to the errors of men (Jn. 8:32). And they need to clearly understand that it and it alone can save our soul (Jas. 1:21)—not the wisdom of men and his philosophies (Col. 2:6-9). Parents need to show and teach their children the great importance of seeking God's wisdom from His Word (Prov. 2:1-2; 3:5; 4:20, etc.).

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS IN TEACHING

Concerned Parents need something concrete to help them do their job of teaching well. What are some practical suggestions that would be of benefit in getting the job done?

1. **First and foremost—by my own attitudes toward and acceptance of the Bible** (Deut. 6:6-9). Our children need to see that we actually believe that the Bible is the Word of God and they see us delving into a study of the Bible constantly (2 Tim. 2:15).
2. **Spend time helping them to be able to read with understanding and application** (Eph. 3:3-5). This may require securing an easier version for them to read. It may be helpful for them to learn to use a Bible Dictionary or Word Study Book to help them to understand the meaning of certain words.
3. **As they mature, help them learn how to use good reference works that help in not only understanding the Bible, but how to apply it to one's life** (Jas. 1:21-25). It is not enough to know—we must learn how to apply the teachings of the Word of God to our lives.
4. **Give them reasons for believing the Bible is the Inspired Revelation from God to man.** (See below).

SOME REASONS FOR BELIEVING IN THE BIBLE

Children have minds that are developing and they need to be given opportunity to learn how to have good reasons for believing what they believe. The Christian is commanded to *"always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear..."* (1 Pet. 3:15). There are many areas outside of the Bible that help to give credence to the Bible that we will not deal with here—but they are valuable! Our brief

emphasis will be on the evidences of the Bible itself and what it has done for mankind that can help a person to strongly believe in it as the Word of God.

1. The Old Testament lays claim to such. Some 3800 times the Old Testament says: "*The Lord spoke,*" "*The word of the Lord came,*" "*The Lord said,*" etc. (2 Sam. 23:2; Isa. 1:2; Ezek. 1:3, etc.).
2. The New Testament lays claim to such. (1 Cor. 2:9-13; Acts 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:15-16; 2 Pet. 1:21; 1 Thess. 2:13; Gal. 1:11-12; etc.).
3. Jesus recognized the Old Testament as inspired. (Matt. 5:17-18; Luke 24:44-45).
4. Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to the Apostles to guide them into all truth. (John 16:13; Acts 1:8).
5. The New Testament writers not only claimed guidance by the Spirit, but expected obedience to their teaching as the Word of God. (1 Cor. 2:13; 14:37; 2 Thess. 3:14; 1 Thess. 2:13).
6. Some general observations:
 - a) Its morality is the highest—it demands purity and holiness.
 - b) Its impartiality is obvious, telling both the good and bad about anyone.
 - c) Its calmness in recording events and teachings.
 - d) Its brevity.
 - e) Its all-sufficiency (up to date).
 - f) Its reasonableness—God is lifted up; the true description of man is given; but that man can be redeemed.
 - g) Its unity—there are no contradictions—it is in complete harmony with itself.
 - h) Its fulfilled prophecies—especially those concerning Christ.
7. Evidences that need to be looked at carefully also:
 - a) The Apostles gave their lives believing in its divinity (Jn. 6:68).
 - b) The early Christians accepted the concept of its Inspiration.
 - c) Because the Bible has endured the onslaughts of men for ages.
 - d) Its great influence on the lives all over the world.
 - e) Its agreement with Natural Science—does not have the false theories of Science.
 - f) Its historical accuracy.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The need is there for our children to be taught that the Bible is the Word of God; but so is the means of evidences that are needed to help them to believe. Parents, let us not assume they believe—let's be sure they have the evidences upon which to rest their belief—both sure and steadfast!

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW

- 1. How can I help my children to come to a belief in the Bible as the Word of God?**
- 2. What are some practical suggestions of what to do to help them?**
- 3. What are the varied areas of evidences for believing in the Bible as God's Word?**

Lesson Four

"Helping Our Children to Have a Healthy Emotional Life"

Children are a precious gift from God (Ps. 127:3-5). He has entrusted to us the teaching and training of these children so that their future can be bright and blessed. Unfortunately, no one has all the answers on how to raise children—much less to follow such correctly. We should all want to raise our children to be healthy, happy, and emotionally mature, but raising well-adjusted children is no absolute guarantee—even with the best of intentions. Why is this true? It is because the child has a will of its own and will ultimately make the final choice of what he or she will become. However, this does not excuse Parents from doing the very best they can with their children (Prov. 22:6).

IDENTIFYING A HEALTHY EMOTIONAL CHILD

The Scriptures do give some insight to help us understand how a child should act and to conduct themselves around others. The following would seem to be indicators:

1. One who has learned to love God and love others (Matt. 22:37-40).
2. One who is respectful and obedient to Parents (Eph. 6:1-4; 1 Time. 3:4).
3. One that is not accused of being riotous or unruly (Tit. 1:6).
4. One willing to be taught in the Scriptures (2 Tim. 1:5).
5. One willing to receive and treasure the commands of God (Prov. 2:1-9).
6. One who does not despise discipline (Prov. 3:11-12; 13:1).
7. One striving to keep his heart with all diligence (Prov. 4:23).
8. One who forsakes foolishness and laziness (Prov. 9:6; 10:1).
9. etc.

A Healthy Emotional Child will be able to handle the challenges of life. He will be in control of his emotions, actions, tongue. He will appreciate his family. He will become increasingly independent.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS

What are some practical suggestions for Parents in order for their children to be healthy emotionally?

1. **Have a stable, God-directed, and predictable home situation.** A child needs to feel secure in their home (Tit. 2:4). Such will definitely help them to deal with temptations outside the home.
2. **Train the child to develop a sense of internal control.** The basic purpose of all teaching and training is self-control (Jas. 1:26; Gal. 5:23). Self-control can give a sense of self-

worth. As the child becomes older and gets out on his own, this becomes crucial.

3. **Teach a Biblical basis for a positive self-image.** Our worth was established at creation (Gen. 1:26)—we were created in the image of God. Our behavior does not affect our worth, but it can affect our relationships and our ultimate destiny. Our children's importance should not depend on good grades, good looks, athletic ability, or any other such matter. They need to clearly understand that they are worth the price that Jesus paid to redeem them! Unfortunately, a child's self-worth can often depend upon how their Parents react to them or view them. Without being wanted and loved by Parents, it is hard for them to have good-self images. And what is unfortunate, they react in the wrong way to a low self-esteem.
4. **Teach and demonstrate God's love for His creatures (Jn. 3:16).** Help them not only to value humans for who they are, but to also love them in spite of what they do.

OUTCOME OF AN UNHEALTHY EMOTIONAL OUTLOOK

Children can be affected by those around them because they choose to allow it. When Parents do not really care or people around them do not care, it is easy to give in and give up and flow with the tide that leads in the wrong direction. The outcome is not very desirable and can be a cause of much grief to Parents who feel guilty over their failure with their children. The following thoughts should be obvious:

1. They become unstable, insecure, disturbed, reactionary, withdrawn, etc. (Col. 3:21).
2. They will come across as troubled children.
3. They will become unmanageable children (Eph. 6:4).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The Bible states that love covers a multitude of sins! (Rom. 5:20; 1 Pet. 4:8). Where a child experiences loving and caring Parents, mistakes can be overlooked and overcome. There are no perfect Parents....so, all we can do is do our best and hope for the best with our children.

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW

1. **What are some indications of a healthy emotional child?**
2. **What are some things that Parents can do to help children to be healthy emotionally?**
3. **What are some indications of an unhealthy emotional child?**
4. **If someone told you that you had an emotionally unhealthy child, what would you do?**
5. **Are we willing and able as Parents to perceive when a child is unhealthy emotionally?**

Lesson Five

"Helping Our Children to Make Proper Decisions on Whom to Marry"

God created the "male" first and then made this observation: *"It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."* (Gen. 2:18). Thus began what we call "marriage." There is a good chance that each of our children will eventually make a decision to marry; therefore, this is one of the major decisions that they will need to be prepared for in order to make it wisely. Parents can certainly be helpful in preparing their children to make wise decisions. Mankind has the ability to think, reason, perceive, plan, purpose, will, follow through, and to choose. Exercising these abilities, when done properly, can help us as we gather pertinent facts, observe them closely, and then reach a conclusion....and then make a proper decision. But, it is obvious that making decisions can truly be challenging for both young and old (Josh. 24:15). Hopefully, Parents have learned the process of making good decisions so that they can pass this information on to their children.

THREE IMPORTANT DECISIONS FOR YOUTH

As we all know, a person will make thousands upon thousands of decisions in their lifetime, but some of these decisions will be critical to their physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional welfare. There are three important decisions that youth will make fairly early in their lives that need to be prepared for as best possible—they are: (1) A life's work; (2) A life's mate; and (3) Whether to become a Christian or not. One thing that makes these three decisions so critical is that they are generally being made when young people do not have great wisdom, knowledge, experience, and judgment (Prov. 3:5; 1:1-4). And obviously, another thing is that these three decisions can affect their entire life here and hereafter. They could possibly affect their eternal destiny. Parents cannot usually make these decisions for their children, but they can truly be helpful by giving them insights and understanding which will enable them to make better decisions for their lives.

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

If Parents really want to be helpful in preparing their children for these critical decisions, they need to do the following things, at least:

1. **Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).**
2. **Train them in the way they should walk (Prov. 22:6).**
3. **Challenge them to see after God's wisdom and knowledge (Matt. 5:6).**
 - a) God's Word is the only adequate book to train them (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
 - b) It trains in mind, in morals, and in body.
4. **Emphasize God's church and His Righteousness and that it must be the first emphasis of one's life (Matt. 6:33).**

5. Stress to them that all decisions, as well as actions, should be to God's glory (1 Cor. 10:31).
6. Stress for them to always be faithful to God (Rev. 2:10).
7. Stress for them to seek out those persons, places, and circumstances which contribute to all of the above things.

PREPARATIONS FOR CHOOSING A MATE

Just what are some practical insights and helpful means to prepare our children for choosing a mate? We believe that strong emphasis should be placed on the following things:

1. Teach early for your child to become the best marriage partner they can become.
2. Stress for them to be a helper to their mate:
 - a) To make it successfully through life;
 - b) To be prepared to go to heaven someday.
3. To marry someone who feels the same way you do about the above things.
4. To marry someone who will help you to be a faithful Christian (2 Cor. 6:14-18).
5. To marry someone who will help bring up your children correctly (Prov. 22:6).

There are obviously many other things that should be stressed that a Parent will have opportunity to stress to their children. These are serious matters.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Our children need to be reminded that *"fools despise wisdom and instruction."* (Prov. 1:7). Therefore, they should not forget the correct teaching of their parents (Prov. 1:8). The home can be an effective training ground for our children in order to help prepare them for making these important decisions. Decision-making should be an early learning process for our children. We want them to become emotionally mature, to learn to be self-sufficient, and to confidently make good decisions in their lives.

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW

1. What are three important decisions that our children will possibly make by the time they are in their early 20s?
2. What makes these decisions so critical?
3. How can Parents help them make these important decisions?
4. What are some specifics that will help our children in the choice of a Mate?
5. What specifically should our children remember?
6. How early should children be allowed to make their own decisions?

Lesson Six

"Helping Our Children to Respect Their Parents"

Proverbs 31 gives a description of the excellent woman—the ideal woman. One of the rewards of being an excellent woman (wife and/or mother) is the respect that she will receive from her husband and children: *"Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her."* (31:28). Some Parents act so foolishly before their children that it is hard for the children to respect them (Prov. 14:1). Wise Parents will build their houses, teach their children *"the way of wisdom"* and lead them *"in paths of righteousness."* (Prov. 4:11). However, respect for Parents is an understood and accepted principle in all societies. One of the sinful acts listed in Rom. 1:18-32 was being *"disobedient to parents"* (v. 30). It is also seen in God's general condemnation of the world at large in 2 Timothy 3:2. God makes it very clear in His Word (both Old and New Testaments) that he wants children to respect their parents:

a) Exodus 20:12—*"Honor your father and mother...."*

b) Ephesians 6:1-2—*"Children, obey your parents...honor your father and mother..."*

Israel was condemned for their lack of such (Isa. 3:1-5). Eli's children did not respect God, nor their father and were punished by God (1 Sam. 2:12-24; 3:14). One of the things that I have personally appreciated so much is the respect that our children have shown to us, and they have taught their children as well to respect us. It is a great blessing!

HOW IS RESPECT SHOWN?

A helpful way of getting an understanding of a word like "respect" is to get a list of synonyms to clarify the gist of the word; such as: Admiration, Hold a High Opinion or Regard for, Deference, Esteem, Reverence, Value, Defer to, Look up to, Appreciate, Recognize, Obey, Acknowledge, etc. The Scriptures give several indications of how this respect is to be shown in the following passages:

2 Timothy 3:2—Disrespect is shown by disobedience....so, respect would be shown by being obedient.

Ephesians 6:1-2—Stresses both obedience and honor (esteem, revere, giving help when needed).

Proverbs 31:28—To call blessed and to praise them.

Proverbs 23:22—Listen to Parents and not despise them.

Proverbs 22:1; 19:26—To give loving favor to and not mistreat them, nor bring shame on them.

We should our respect by words, attitudes, looks, and deeds. We all need to be respected—even our children as well! God can command us to respect, honor, obey our Parents, but respect is something that we also have to earn by our actions, attitudes, looks, and deeds! Gaining our children's respect is not an automatic response on their part. They are not robots, but have a mind

of their own with which to observe, reason, and conclude certain things. So, it might be well for us to look at how Parents can gain the respect of their children.

GAINING OUR CHILDREN'S RESPECT

Hypocritical, insincere, and dishonest Parents will find it very hard to have the respect of their children. Such actions probably will frustrate children rather than evoke respect. There are some basic things that must be in place if we can rightfully hope to win their respect. Let's look at some of these from Scripture:

Genesis 1:26—They deserve our respect because they are also created in the image of God. Job showed respect for servants in his house because of this very thing (Job 31:13-15). If we do not respect them, why should they in turn respect us?

Ephesians 6:4—They should respect us because we help to see after their spiritual well-being. Job showed this concerned for his children (Job 1:5). Abraham is used as an example by God of a father who would teach his children after him (Gen. 18:19). Teachable opportunities that occur every day need to be taken advantage of (Isa. 28:9-10).

Hebrews 12:9—They should respect us because we help teach them to discipline themselves. All proper discipline is an effort to help the person to learn how to discipline themselves. It must be done correctly. God warns fathers not to provoke their children to wrath (Eph. 6:4). Respect will come as the child see the value of discipline and becomes more self-disciplined.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7—Proper teaching in everyday situations can help the child make good application of the Word of God for his life.

Proverbs 19:18—Discipline children early while there is hope of correction. If Parents wait too long to deal with a problem child, they may fail later in helping to make needed changes (Prov. 3:11-12).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

It is possible that neglecting to help our children to respect their parents could result in disrespect for all authority. And the opposite could also be true—helping our children to respect us will make it easier for them to respect others. Most of all, it should lead to a respect for God!

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW

- 1. How can Parents show that they respect their children?**
- 2. Why is such important?**
- 3. How can Parents help gain the respect of their children?**
- 4. Why respect for Parents and respect for others tied together?**

Lesson Seven

"Helping Our Children to See That They are Respected"

In the previous lesson we have shown that respect needs to be mutual and that it is both commanded and needs to be earned as well. Husbands and wives need to be respectful of one another (Eph. 5:33; 1 Pet. 3:7). And as well, so should Parent and child! A Parent should not depend on God's commanding children to respect their Parents, but they should make every effort to merit their respect by their words, looks, attitudes, and actions. But, in this lesson, we are desirous of looking at the things that will help our children know that they are loved, wanted, and respected—as God would have Parents to be.

ACTIONS THAT HELP CHILDREN TO KNOW THEY ARE RESPECTED

"Words" are needed to help reassure children that they are respected, but words alone may not be sufficient if not accompanied by proper things. The Apostle John showed this by his inspired statement in Ch. 3:18—"*My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue (only), but in deed and in truth.*" The expression "*Actions speak louder than words*" is quite appropriate to explain what the Apostle was trying to get across to his readers. Let's look at some practical ways that Parents can reassure their children they are respected:

Matt. 25:15—Jesus illustrates a very important principle in this parable. He did not expect more out of these people than they could rightfully do, but He did expect out of them what they were capable of doing. And....He condemned the man that did not live up to his capabilities (25:26-30), and praised the men who did (25:21, 23). Thus, to ask someone to do something special, that they are capable of, shows that we respect them—that we have confidence in them. When we give sincere and merited praise for a job well done, we have expressed respect for them and their efforts.

Matt. 25:23—To praise and offer a reward to someone for a job well-done shows that we have a respect for them. But our efforts must not be misunderstand as a bribe on our part to get our way or to get what we want.

Acts 11:19-26—When Barnabas went to find Saul (later Paul) to get him to help with the work at Antioch, it showed his respect for Paul. Barnabas evidently saw great potential in him that made respecting him easier. If Barnabas later became envious and jealous of Paul's talents and abilities and didn't want to work with him, it would show a lack of respect for Paul. Possibly, in the same way that we may ask for the advice of someone, but then not to pay attention to it would leave the impression that the person was not really respected. Children can see this as well. Our actions must show that we are sincere in asking for their help or their advice when we do such....especially when the decision made will directly affect them.

Titus 3:9—Paul wanted to let Titus know that he didn't have to be concerned about a bunch of foolish and hurtful disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the Law. His reason was: *"for they are unprofitable and useless."* Paul did not have in mind about the questions that youth may ask that may appear foolish to an adult, but they are not to youth. When a Parent takes the time to deal with sincere questions, they show they have a love and respect for that child. The same is true with adults as well.

Matt. 7:12—The "golden rule" states: *"Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them..."* If you don't want to be "talked down to" or "talked about" or "embarrassed....then, don't do such to your children. Such shows disrespect, not a respect. We need to show respect for their feelings in all situations.

1 John 1:9—Parents need to admit to their children when they are wrong and show true repentance. When such is done, they will win the respect of their children—but at the same time make it easier for their children to do the same.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

An interesting statement that seems to have merit is: *"You cannot show your children you have respect for them unless you have shown them you have respect for yourself."* If this is true, then we had better learn how to respect ourselves. Jesus' statement about the second greatest command may illustrate this: *"Love your neighbor as you love yourself"* (Matt. 22:39).

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW

- 1. Does respect need to be mutual and two-fold?**
- 2. Why must Parents respect their children?**
- 3. What are some ways from Scripture that reassures our children that we respect them?**
- 4. Does a Parent have to respect himself before he can have respect for his children?**
- 5. What are other ways that we can show that we respect our children?**

Lesson Eight

"Helping Our Children to Become Mature"

The goal of parental training is a mature individual able to take his place as an adult in society. Obviously, when they leave they will not be at the height of maturity, but they will be mature enough to function on their own. Children need to, as the saying goes, "*Get out of the nest and try their own wings.*" Children need to be free of parental control as they come of age. They need to prove themselves and find their place in the church and in society. If a child cannot learn to be free of parental control, he is doomed to be ruled all his days by either his father or mother or both. Wise Parents will see that their children can get along without them.

Parents who won't let their children grow up are destined to misery. Their children will tend to be weak, uncertain, vacillating, unable to cope, and broken in spirit. The body may mature, but not the emotions or the mind. Jesus illustrates the concept of how to grow up: "*Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*" (Luke 2:52).

WHAT IS MATURITY?

The concept of maturity in the Scriptures generally has reference to a person coming to "full age," or to a "completeness." It carries with it also the idea of excellence, blameless, ideal, culmination, fulfillment, or full development. Obviously, there are degrees to the concept of maturity. We often use the expression that a person is "mature beyond their age!" We do not usually expect as much maturity out of younger adults as we do of older adults. And there should be indications that a person is in a maturing process. Someone has suggested a possible breakdown of the various ages and states of maturity:

Infancy—being formed.

Ages 7-13—They begin to show signs of maturing.

Ages 14-20—They are able to take almost complete charge of their lives.

Ages 21-39—They are quite capable of applying their maturity to many areas of concern.

Ages 40-59—From their education, they have a good grip on things.

Ages 60-74—They are able to gather in fruits of long planting and tending and have a clear vision of their final journey and can plan with assurance.

Ages 75-Death—They are still growing (becoming) and know how to bring their earthly voyage to a successful, peaceful conclusion.

THE MATURING PROCESS OF CHILDREN

The wise parents will look for the day when their children will be on their own and handling their affairs wisely. But that has to come over a period of years and great effort on the part of the parents to prepare them for such a day. In this lesson we want to look at some things that parents can do to help their children become mature and on their own.

1. **A child needs to be taught to honor and obey his parents** (Eph. 6:1-2). Rules need to be given and observed. Jesus' example of this is seen in the statement: "**He was subject to them.**" (Luke 2:51). A child needs to understand that when rules are disobeyed there will be discipline to follow, swift and sure, but administered in love. If we fail to help them mature in this understanding, they will be corrected by a harsher power (the power and rule of society) that can bring a never ending sorrow (Rom. 13:1-7).
2. **A child needs to be taught to honor and obey the governing authorities** (Rom. 13:1-7). He needs to respect the rights, property, and person of others. Without such, he becomes a problem for society to deal with. Obviously, submitting to God makes all other submissions easier.
3. **A child needs to be allowed to begin making decisions for himself** (2 Cor. 13:5). Paul's idea of the child of God examining himself is just another way of saying...."*See how good a job you are doing in making decisions in your life.*" As a child grows in understanding and reliability, he should be granted more freedom to make decisions and face the consequences of bad ones. It is a slow process, but a sure one. In the process of this, he needs to learn to take into consideration, not only his own wants and wishes, but the rights and wishes of others and also the laws of God.
4. **Parents should not force the child to break away on his own** (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21). This usually occurs in anger and bitterness that will end or greater hinder the continuing of a loving relationship. The father of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15) showed wisdom in letting his son go. He obviously did not want him to leave, but wisely let him leave without causing a terrible scene. Parents have to let their children go sooner or later so they can complete their maturing process to be able to stand on their own two feet. The Apostle John expressed his joy over this very thing in a spiritual sense: "**Greater joy have I none than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.**" (3 John 4).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Parents are training their children in order to lose one of their main jobs in life. They must want them to grow up, be on their own, and complete their maturing process for life. There is no absolute guarantee that our children will not disappoint us at times, but we must help them to become mature.

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW

1. **Is maturity a state of being or a state of becoming?**
2. **Would you equate wisdom and maturity as the same?**
3. **Can a person be mature in one area of his life and immature in another?**
4. **Does maturity have anything to do with one's age?**
5. **Is education an indication of maturity?**
6. **Does experience indicate maturity?**
7. **What are some things that Parents need to do to help children to mature?**
8. **What are some consequences of immaturity on the part older children?**

Lesson Nine

"Helping Our Children to Avoid the Pitfalls of a Permissive Society"

The Apostle John warns God's people: **"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."** (1 Jn. 2:15). The word "world" is used in more than one sense. In this passage it is trying to identify those people or those things that are contrary to the will of God. John shows this by the next verse (16) when he indicates the allurements of the world are the **"Lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."** This word "world" is trying to identify people whose primary interest is this life only. To be worldly-minded is to be concerned for the things here and now that can give satisfaction or pleasure. Jesus uses the concept of "world" in contrast to Light. People who love the light want to hear and accept truth from God. Those who are of the world love darkness or falsehood or evil (John 3:19-21).

Men today have coined an expression that tries to identify the "world" in contrast to light, truth, or righteousness—it is *"a Permissive Society."* There are other terms such as: "Fun loving Indulgence," "Self-centered Living," "Unrestrained Living," "Not recognizing or accepting the rightness or wrongness of an activity according to God's Standard." The child of God is called upon to come out of this kind of thinking and activity and live a holy life dedicated to eternal things (2 Cor. 6:14-18; 7:1). Thus, if we are concerned for our children:

- 1. We will not only live this kind of life;**
- 2. And also show great concern for them to do so also;**
- 3. And help them to avoid the sinful activities of a "permissive society."**

Our efforts in this lesson will be to stress the need to understand the things that are wrong and then help them to be strong and resist the temptations to indulge in these wrong activities.

A BASIC NECESSITY FOR PARENTS

If we are to be helpful to our children, we must have an absolute "objective" standard by which to measure all of our actions. And for the Christian, the Bible is the only reliable standard. It is inspired of God, it is a total guide for living, and it will be the basis for man's judgment in that Great Day (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Jn. 12:48). A subjective standard is in reality no standard at all because each person will do that which is right in their own eyes (Judges 17:6). Parents must instill in the heart of their children at an early age a respect for the Bible as a standard for their lives (Deut. 6:6-7; 4:9-10). If we fail to do this, they too will go by the rule *"each person will do that which is right in their own eyes!"* And as the home goes, so goes the nation!

AN EMPHASIS UPON PURITY

Purity of life is strongly encouraged and stressed in the Word of God! (Matt. 5:8; 1 Tim. 5:22). But purity of life has to come from a pure heart (1 John 3:3; 2 Pet. 3:1; 1 Pet. 1:22). And

Parents must exemplify this purity of heart and life before they can effectively teach it to their children. They have not only learned the necessity of purity, but have learned how, by experience, how to keep that purity of mind and life—thus, they are then capable of helping their children to be pure.

WHAT WILL HELP OUR CHILDREN TO BE PURE?

By experience and from a study of the Word of God, Parents are capable of helping their children follow in their footsteps (if they are willing). At least the following three things should be helpful to teach and stress to our children:

- 1. Stress must be placed on guarding the mind or the heart!** The wise man made this very clear when he challenged people to: *"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life."* (Prov. 4:23). He also added: *"For as he thinks in his heart, so is he."* (Prov. 23:7). And Jesus warns of the grave dangers of polluting the heart: *"For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man..."* (Matt. 15:19-20). We need to fill our minds (our hearts) with the right kind of good things (Phil. 4:8). Pure thoughts beget pure words and usually right words are translated into proper deeds. Children's hearts should be fed upon the right kind of literature, movies, etc.
- 2. Stress that one's body belongs to Christ once we have been redeemed!** (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Therefore, we must guard what our bodies are involved in. In the midst of a sex-craved world, the Christian must keep his body pure from sexual immorality (1 Cor. 6:15-18). Pre-marital sex is condemned by God. While a permissive society says that it is okay—they set themselves up against God who condemns it (Heb. 13:4). A permissive attitude can lead one into alcohol, drugs, gambling, illicit sex, indulging in pleasurable things.....and a departure from the fellowship with God (1 John 1:6-7). The outcome of an impure mind can be an impure life. Such can also lead to: unwanted pregnancies, venial diseases, reputations ruined, or be affected emotional as well as spiritually (Rom. 1:24-32).
- 3. Stress putting "first things first!"** *"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...."* (Matt. 6:33). God and His church must take priority in our lives so that we in turn can stress this to our children as well. One person observed: *"He who gives God second place, gives Him no place at all."* Jesus made this clear in His teachings (Matt. 6:24; 12:30).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In a permissive world where just about anything goes, it is a greater challenge to live a pure life. The home is the best place to help determine character, morals, spiritual ideals, and probably uppermost of all to stress purity of heart and life! But that home must have parents who are Christians and are strong in their convictions in regard to purity and high moral values. Anything less will meet with heartache and sorrow.

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW

- 1. How is the word "world" used in this study?**
- 2. How is "light" and "darkness" used to show us what is right?**
- 3. What is meant by the expression "permissive society?"**
- 4. What is a basic necessity if parents are to help their children guard against such?**
- 5. What are some things that permissiveness can lead to?**
- 6. What are some outcomes of giving in to our permissive society?**
- 7. What three things must be stressed to our children to help them not fall into the trap of sinful living?**

Lesson Ten

"Helping Our Children to Grow out of Selfishness"

Wrong outward actions have their beginning in the heart (Matt. 15:19). And possibly all sinful activities go back to selfishness. Selfishness is expressed outwardly as rudeness, disobedience, a lack of cooperation, and even disrespect for authority. Sadly, these actions are natural in the young child. An infant is possibly the most selfish person alive. It is of no real concern to them to awaken parents at 1:00 A.M. for feeding or against at 3:00 A.M. for a diaper change. This is expected, but not appreciated, by parents who realize that this is an infant. Good manners, obedience, and cooperation are not can be rightfully expected of infants or very young children. Parents realize the need to teach, discipline, and train a child to grow out of his selfishness (Prov. 22:15). God wants His people's lives to adorn the gospel of Christ (Tit. 2:10). He does not want us to be rude, boorish, ill-mannered, harsh, or unkind. Rather, that we be loving and concerned people (1 Cor. 13:4-8). And He certainly wants parents to teach and train their children away from selfishness and its evil fruits.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS

Many things could be suggested, but these few will be given for your thoughtful meditation and evaluation with the hope of engendering further discussion on these things.

1. **Parents must be concerned about their children growing out of selfishness and show their concern clearly to their children** (Heb. 5:12-14; 6:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:1-2). This is clearly considered infantile behavior and not acceptable as children mature.
2. **Parents need to help their children see what are the desirable attitudes they should have** (1 Cor. 13:4-8). Such things as: kindness, unselfishness, humility, well-mannered, avoiding murmuring and complaining, etc. (Phil. 2:14; Jude 16).
3. **Parents should certainly set the proper example of such before them** (1 Tim. 4:12). Rude, boorish, ill-mannered, harsh, and unkind parents will certainly fail their children here. Their wrong example can undermine any effort of corrective teaching. Parents that ridicule policemen for giving them a ticket for speeding or criticize faithful elders and preachers before their children will find it very hard for their children to be obedient and cooperative—even with their parents.
4. **Parents should help their children understand the dangers of the wrong companions (1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Cor. 6:14-18)**. They need to be aware of the behavior of their children's friends, as well as with that of their children—so they can help them to see the dangers of wrong attitudes and behavior.
5. **Possibly one of the most important factors in rearing children is consistent and loving discipline (Eph. 6:4)**. This requires correction as well as positive teaching of what is acceptable behavior. Correction needs to be done with kindness, but firmness. Proper chastening produces respect for the one who disciplines (Heb. 12:9; Prov. 13:24).

6. **Parents absolutely need to teach their children to be respectful of authority in general, but in particular, the authority of God!** (Matt. 28:18; Rom. 13:1-7). If children do not learn this at home, it will be hard for them to learn it after they leave home.
7. **Parents must be consistent in their training and correcting of their children.** It is useless and harmful for a parent to threaten a child with a spanking for wrong behavior and not carry it out. And then, to keep on threatening and not doing anything about it, deepens the harm it can do. Or, to punish a child harshly for wrong doing one day and the next day ignores it breeds confusion and disrespect for the parents. When a child tests its parents threatening words, he needs to know that the parent will carry out his threat! And also, parents must work together, not against one another in this process.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Parents who "can't wait" until their children are teenagers to begin teaching the need for respect and unselfishness are in for a rude awakening. Rude, disrespectful, and selfish traits must be attached at an early age or parents will have lost the battle. When a mother laughs at her three-year-old who has just kicked her in the shin in a fit of rebellious rage is to be pitied—as well as the child. The mother, because if she does not awaken to her folly, she will cry many bitter tears over that child in years to come. The child, because it will reap the painful fruits of an undisciplined life (Prov. 29:15).

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW

1. **What is considered to be a root cause of all sin in one's life?**
2. **List some things that parents can do to help their children deal with selfishness.**
3. **Why is consistency such an important factor in the training of children?**
4. **Who suffered the most from an older selfish child?**

Lesson Eleven

"Helping Our Children to Love the Lord's Church"

During Jesus' public ministry, He made this prediction: "***Upon this rock, I will build My church!***" (Matt. 16:18). The church was built and had its beginning in actuality on the Day of Pentecost (as recorded in Acts 2). From this time on the church was spoken of as being in existence (Acts 5:11; 8:1, 8; etc.). Jesus gave His life in order to purchase the church (Eph. 5:25; Acts 20:28) because God had planned for it to come into existence this way (Isaiah 2:1-3). The Scriptures use different terms to identify and describe the church, such as:

- 1) The church is the Temple of God in which His Spirit dwells (Eph. 2:21-22).
- 2) The church is the "household" or "family" of God—we are His children (1 Tim. 3:15; 1 John 3:1).
- 3) The church is the "body" of Christ with Jesus as its "head" (Eph. 2:21-13).
- 4) The church is the "called out" (EK-KLESIA) people of God or Christ (2 Thess. 2:14; Rom. 16:16; Acts 20:28).
- 5) The church is made up of "saved" people (Acts 2:41, 17; Eph. 5:23).
- 6) The church is the "kingdom" of God into which "saved" people are conveyed (transferred or translated) (Col. 2:13-14).

The above things, plus more that could be given, help us to see the great importance that God has given to the church in His scheme of things.

WHY LOVE THE CHURCH?

If Jesus loved the church enough to die for it (Eph. 5:25; Acts 20:28), it would seem to make sense that God's people should love the church as well. If we are to love God with all of our Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength (Matt. 22:37-40; Lk. 10:27), why would not that also include loving His people, the church? We are actually commanded to love the church according to many passages (John 13:35; 1 John 3:11, 16, etc.). If we love the church, we will therefore uphold it, pray for it, promote it, and sacrifice for it's furtherance upon earth (John 14:15). We will show or express this love (1 John 3:15-18) to one or more saved people that make up the church. We can love the church as an "entity" (as a group) or as individuals that make up the group. Our love for the church should just be "second nature!" We will attend the worship assemblies of the church (Heb. 10:24-25) and be involved in good works with the rest of the church (Tit. 3:8, 14). We will find some of our greatest joy on earth as we associate with the various members of the church.

But why stress the need to "love the church?" It is obvious to all of us. We are being called upon to love imperfect people! (1 John 1:8-2:2). That is not the easiest thing to do at times. We may be able to love those who love us, but it is a greater challenge to love those who may not love us (Matt. 5:43-48). The primary reasons given for why we ought to love the church is:

- 1) God loves the church in spite of its imperfections (1 Jn. 3:16).

- 2) If we do not love our brother whom we can see, how can we love God whom we have not seen? (1 John 4:20).
- 3) If we say we love God, then we must of necessity love our brother (1 John 4:21).
- 4) To love our brothers in Christ is an indication that we have passed from death to life (1 John 3:14).
- 5) To hate our brother makes us a murderer and no murderer has eternal life abiding in him (1 John 3:15).

THE IMPORTANCE OF HELPING OUR CHILDREN TO LOVE THE LORD'S CHURCH

Our children are growing up in a world that is filled with churches that have been started by men. The Lord only established one church (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:4-6). Our children need to know the difference and want to identify with the Lord's church. Men cannot save; neither can the churches started by them save people. It is the Lord who adds the saved to His church! If we want our children to be saved eternally, they need to be sure of being among the saved who are added to the church Jesus built. We need to help them to become a member of the church that Jesus built, but also to help them learn to love the church as Jesus loved it.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

If parents do not know the difference between churches started by men and the one that Jesus built, it is for sure that their children will not know the difference—unless someone else teaches them. Parents need to know the differences and teach their children the difference. But they also need to love in word and deed their love for the church so that they can have a positive influence upon their children to also love the church of our Lord.

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW

- 1. What are some things that make the church so important to God and also humans?**
- 2. Why be concerned about which church one belongs to and loves?**
- 3. How did God show His love for the church?**
- 4. How do we show our love for His church?**
- 5. How do we teach our children so that they will love the church?**

Lesson Twelve

"Helping Our Children to Do All They Do in Love"

Over 3500 years ago, God directed Moses to command the Israelite Nation that they were to: *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."* (Deut. 6:5). Jesus, about 2000 years ago, affirmed this again (Matt. 22:35-38); but He added that there was a second great command: *"to love your neighbor as yourself."* (Matt. 22:39). He stated that these two commands are the basis of one's fulfilling all that the Law and the Prophets commanded (Matt. 22:40; Rom. 13:10). If one truly loves, he will do exactly what the Law of God says we should do towards God and towards our neighbor (John 13:34-35; 14:15-21). *"Love does not ignore what is right, but does what is right!"* (1 John 3:7). It is for this reason that God urges His people to *"walk in love!"* (Eph. 5:1-2). And it would also be the reason why the Apostle John said that he rejoiced to hear of Christians walking in truth (or love) (3 John 4-7). To walk in love is to act out of love or concern for others. Every parent should not only walk in love themselves, but help to teach their children to walk in love....or to do all they do in love!

THE IMPORTANCE OF WALKING IN LOVE

Several passages stress the importance of doing what we do out of love for God or love for others, as follows:

1 Cor. 13:1-3—Unless we act out of love our actions will not accomplish what is desired.

1 Cor. 8:1—Knowledge is good, but it can puff us up. But acting out of love builds people up and makes for a much better relationship.

1 Peter 4:8—Love helps to cover over a multitude of sins—helping to lift a terrible burden off our shoulders.

1 John 3:16-18—By acting out of love, we know that the love of God abides in us.

1 John 5:3—Love takes away the burdensomeness (grievousness) of obedience.

The Apostle John used strong language to make sure we connect love and obedience together when he stated: *"He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.... whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother."* (1 John 3:7, 10). The person who wants to be looked upon as righteous is the one who loves God and his neighbor. The one who loves God and his neighbor is the one that is practicing righteousness.

MOTIVATIONS THAT MOVE MEN

All actions come out of one or more motivations. Some motivations may be stronger than others and therefore are more basic in being able to motivate us to act. Following are some of the more basic motivations that have motivated humans from the very beginning of time unto the present:

1. **Fear**—Men can be motivated to act out of fear of punishment (Matt. 25:46) or out of fear of having to give an account some day for our deeds (2 Cor. 5:10). This motivation is used in Scripture over and over at times—especially in the Old Testament! But love is the greater motivator. If we love, then there is no reason to fear for: *perfect love casts out fear....but he who fears has not been made perfect in love.*" (1 John 4:17-18).
2. **Reward**—Men can be motivated to act in order to receive a reward—the greater the reward, the greater the motivation. The rewards generally offer to us the satisfying of our needs either physically, spiritually, socially, or emotionally—or all of them. God promises us an abundant life here (John 10:10) and heaven (eternal life) after death (John 14:1). If the rewards offered do not appeal to us, there is little likelihood that we will be moved to act.
3. **Hate or Anger**—Men react or act towards God or other people out of an attitude of hate or anger. There is a desire to revenge or punish another person because of what they may or may not have done to us. Obviously, this is not what should motivate the Christian. To do so, identifies him with the world and not as a child of God (1 John 3:10-15).
4. **Love**—Love is possibly the highest of all motivations to do good or right. When Faith, Hope, and Love are compared....Love is the greatest (1 Cor. 13:13). Love is said to be the outlook that helps us to fulfill all that the Law teaches (Rom. 13:10). And it helps us to do so without obedience being burdensome (1 John 5:3).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We all act out of motivation. Much of our actions are prompted from inferior or wrong motivations. The Christian's challenge is to act out of the highest of all motivations—LOVE! Of all things that we need to teach our children, it certainly should be to do all they do out of a motivation of love.

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW

1. **Why is "love" such an important motivation?**
2. **What are some basic reasons for acting out of love?**
3. **What are some other motivations out of which we act?**
4. **Why must children be taught to act out of love? Why do they need it?**
5. **What does hate or anger motivate people to do?**

Lesson Thirteen

"Helping Our Children to Teach and Defend God's Truth"

Children and grandchildren are certainly a desirable gift from the Lord and a great blessing to those parents that carry out their responsibilities toward them correctly. They are given to us by God to train them for their life ahead of them. This training has to start very early and continue until they are able to be out on their own (Eccl. 12:1). This training will involve a lot of things:

1. Basically, the way he should go (Prov. 22:6);
2. To learn from his mistakes (James 5:19-20);
3. It must involve both show and tell (Deut. 6:5-7; Eph. 6:1-4);
4. It must involve the need to love God, His Word, His Church, and Others (Matt. 22:37-40; 6:33).

It is not only important to teach and train children to believe and do what is right, but also in turn for them to teach others as well (2 Tim. 2:2). The Apostle Paul used Timothy as an example of one who was taught well by his mother and grandmother and now he is involved in teaching others himself (2 Tim. 1:5-10). Truth is propagated and kept alive by continual teaching!

THE PRIMARY MISSION OF THE CHRISTIAN

The Apostles were given their marching orders and they passed it on to us (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:44-48; Prov. 11:30). They did their best to fulfill this command and the Apostle could indicate in Col. 1:23 that they had done their job well. Now, it is up to us to continue the teaching process to the entire world. If Christian parents are indifferent to this grave responsibility; then, it is doubtful that they will teach their children the need to teach and defend God's truth before the world. Parents need to be brave examples before their children of reaching out with the Gospel....as well as standing firm upon its teaching (Jude 3). It is certainly assumed that parents will feel the need to first teach their children the need of obedience to the Gospel.

THE PRIMARY MISSION OF PARENTS

The primary mission of the Christian and that of parents is the same—preach the gospel to the whole world! But, for the parents, there is a special need not only to teach their children, so they will become Christians, but also to teach them to be teachers....to uphold and defend the Truth of God before others. How can this be done effectively?

1. **Start early to teach children to love God, His Word and to obey it (Prov. 22:6; Deut. 6:5-7).** The earlier we begin the better job we can do. In order to do this, it is imperative that the following three things be done:
 - a) Teaching must be accompanied by a consistent example (1 Cor. 11:1). It is difficult to teach love for God, His Word and obedience to it when our children see that we are allowing other things to keep us from doing what we should.

- b) Teaching must be positive and continual! It is not enough to say it one time, but we need to say it many times....but with a positive emphasis (Deut. 6:70-9)! The teaching and training process requires more than just words, it requires showing them how.
 - c) Teaching must involve training (Eph. 6:4; Heb. 5:5-11; Prov. 22:6). Until a child has actually starting to do a thing, he isn't trained yet. All the telling in the world will not take the place of the actual doing. The way a person learns to preach is to get up and start doing it. Certainly, it takes head knowledge, but a person isn't trained until he actually starts doing it. If we want our children to be able to teach others, we have to help train them to do this very thing.
2. **To teach and actually pray before them for the lost people around us (1 Tim. 2:1-4).** If parents are not concerned about the lost, neither will their children be concerned—unless influenced by someone else!
 3. **To teach them to be like Jesus who was willing to sacrifice all for the salvation of the lost world (Lk. 19:10).** Jesus, even at the age of twelve, had an understanding of his mission—*"to be about My Father's business."* (Lk. 2:49). It was said of Jesus: *"zeal for thy house shall eat me up."* (Jn. 2:17). Our children need to imitate Jesus—but so do we!
 4. **To teach and train them to stand up for and defend God's truth (Phil. 1:16-17; 1 Pet. 3:15).** Give them access to good Bible Study Guides, Tracts, Bible marking method, etc., to they can find the answer for themselves as they talk to others.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The Lord's church needs to be filled with people who are concerned about teaching the lost about us. Not only do each of us need to be taught and trained to obey and uphold God's Truth, but to help our children to effectively do the same. A point of emphasis—each person has to be taught to love and obey for himself. No one will go to heaven on the basis of someone else's actions (Ezek. 18:20). When our children reach the age of accountability, they are just as responsible as anyone else before God for their actions. The church of tomorrow will pretty much be what we teach our children today.

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW

1. **What is the Christian's primary mission?**
2. **What is Parents' primary mission?**
3. **What can Parents do to help their children be prepared to love God, His Word, and to obey it—and also to uphold it?**
4. **Why is it so important for our children to be trained early?**
5. **Can it be said that we have taught and trained our children to love, obey, and uphold God's Truth?**

