

## Bible Study on The Christian Home – Handout 5 Developing a Christian Home Environment

Grace Bible Chapel

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*“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” Ephesians 6:4*

### What is the responsibility of parents to their children?

The society that we live in (21<sup>st</sup> century America) has wandered far from the path of Biblical understanding, and this has taken its toll on how children are raised. Children are considered a burden by many, and therefore scores of married couples are purposely not having children. Such attitudes prevailing in this way also affect those families that do have children. There are also many children being reared in a one parent home, or in some cases a home with two mom's or two dad's. Those that are being reared in traditional homes, that is with a mother and father, are in most cases in a home where both parents are working, and children are thereby receiving less attention from their parents. Most children attend public schools, where the curriculum is based in secular humanism. Many false ideas are taught as fact, the focus is contrary to God, there are continuous assaults on truth, behavior is vain, and Christian philosophy is not present except generally to be ridiculed.

Temptations and worldly allurements are everywhere. To add further chaos to the environment is the sophistication of the modern internet with unlimited amounts of information, including the deepest conceivable degrees of wickedness. Cell phones and high end mobile devices make it easy for youth to be constantly interconnected with each other, and other media of distracting influence. Most youth receive much of their philosophy for living from the television and movies which are pumping out heathenism. Peer pressure acceptance, sports, and political correctness rule the world of our youth. Climate change (a false conception taught as fact) has taken the place of organized religion for most, and is taught as the greatest concern facing the world. Most churches that could have influence on youth have watered their messages, brought in the world's music to the church to entertain, and provide such a poor testimony they do more harm than good. The concept of people as products of evolution has brought about an animalistic mindset of non-accountability. Children are not understood to be sinners, in need of correction / discipline, and ultimately a work of God in the heart, but instead are creatures that require more education and self-esteem. In all these things and more we can see that the challenge for parents rearing their children in such an environment is indeed high, if not off-the-chart. However, what is righteously needed is a commitment to the Word of God, to do what it says, not mixing the world's child rearing philosophies with it, but wholly leaning on the wisdom of God, trusting His commands and Word. It is the Word of God that is alive and powerful, and dedication to following it in the enormously important matter of child rearing is the essential difference.

- The value of children (Ps 127:3-5; 139:13-16):
  - The context of this Psalm is dependence on God for the building and protection of the home (Ps 127:1-3). The home would not be adequately complete without the addition of children. The Psalmist makes it emphatic that children are not mechanically born, they are a **gift of the Lord**. There are many passages, and situations within Scripture (1 Sam 1) when Hannah so desperately wanted a child, or Sarah (Gen 16) as examples, showing the absolute dependence on God to bless by providing children. It is not merely the mechanics, but God that alone can create a new life. The preciousness of children is then here defined by God in this **“gift.”** There is no greater gift, outside of salvation, than a child.
  - The idea of **“reward”** is they should be seen as special from God Himself, and a blessing to those who have invested themselves in confidence in God for the building of their home (Ps 127:1-2). The children God gives should be considered a blessing with which he rewards or favors his people. This concept is again repeated in the history of the lives of God's own beginning with Adam and Eve, and even leading up to the birth of the greatest gift – the Lord Jesus. This means to abuse or neglect God's gift (a child) is considered at the top of the chart of

evil and hideous activity. The most grievous sins listed in the Word of God are sacrifices of children (Lev 20:2; Jer 19:5; Ez 16:20-21).

- **“Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one’s youth”** (Ps 127:4). This depicts a time when men had to physically defend themselves from immediate enemies. Having a home full of strong sons, as Jacob (Gen 35:5), was a benefit and blessing. They were his special strength in the same way as a man with an arsenal (arrows). Although there is not the threat of immediate physical battles today, the blessing of the closeness of children, their support, strength, help, and encouragement is of the greatest magnitude of blessing in this life. That is why it is stated **“blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.”**
- It should be noted that in Scripture, one of the marks of severest judgment of God was always associated with offspring (Ps 21:10; Is 14:20; Ex 34:7). This means there should be no more significant matter in this life than the development and well-being of our children. They are our most valuable asset – nothing else compares.
- Children are also seen in Scripture (because of their importance) as a source of great grief. They can be the source of the greatest joy (Ps 113:9; Prov 23:24), or the greatest heartache (Prov 17:25; 10:1; 19:13). What makes the difference (3 John 4; Prov 23:15-19) between being a grief or being a blessing is the work of God in the heart of the children. This is why there is so much in Scripture concerning the rearing of children for the glory of God.
- Ps 139:13-16 teaches us that God takes particular care in the physical development of every baby. This knowledge should drive God’s parents to cherish what God has so meticulously made and provided as a gift. It should further serve as an admonition – for if God spent such elaborate energy designing each person, then should not parents as stewards of God’s great gift take exorbitant care over the development of the same child!
- The nature of children.
  - A very important aspect associated with child training is to understand what we are dealing with, or who our children are! If this is not understood, and believed so that our actions toward them do not take their reality into account, then our rearing will be faulty.
    - All children are sinners (Ps 51:5). This Psalm teaches us that sin in any child is inbred in them from the moment of conception. We all sin because we are sinners by nature. It is passed on from our parents, and begun with Adam & Eve. The cute baby is a sinner.
    - **“Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child”** (Prov 22:15). The foolishness here is not mere silliness, it is as a result of the child’s fouled spirit in sin. The clarity for this is found in Prov 19:3, this is the same word in Hebrew. In this passage it cannot mean silliness for the child’s way is ruined – ruined in sin, but more **“his heart rages against the Lord.”** The same concept is in Prov 22:15 – it is the same as saying the heart of the child rages against the Lord. Secondly, it is “bound” – means fastened within the heart. The heart is that intangible us, that addresses who we are. Gen 8:21 says that the **“intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth.”** That cute little baby we love is a little sinner. Every person fits under the realm of sin discussed in Roman’s 3. Babies don’t enter the world on neutral ground, all are totally depraved – sinners by nature in rebellion against God, and wanting to be our own god. Understanding the condition, and natural proclivity of the child to be disobedient, selfish, do wrong is the key to understanding how each child must be trained, and disciplined.
    - As all are sinners by nature, a child cannot be allowed to grow up the way he would naturally go. The way he will naturally go is always toward evil (Gen 8:21). This is what is meant in the later part of Prov 29:15 **“a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.”** A mother to any child is the most forgiving, and overlooking of all people, but even with her a child who is not driven away from sin brings shame.
    - Sin is so severe, and so debilitating the baby cannot change his fundamental preference for sin and self to do what is right, nor have a desire to such a change. The curse of which all are under has so ruined them that even though they have a will, with a body, soul, & spirit, made in the image of God to rule, and have creativity; and they are moral beings with reasoning, and have been given a conscience, they are none-the-less by nature all the things the Bible describes concerning them (lovers of darkness, truth suppressors, enemies of God, unrighteous, full of deception and lies, etc...).
    - They are also in an environment of growing that is equally under the curse where their experience, motivation, and education are all tainted by a mixture of good and evil. They are

also constantly tempted, and held captive by the temptation. They are to a degree held from complete ruin by the common grace of God (Gen 20:6; 2 Thess 2:7; Rom 1:18-28). In these conditions they begin making their journey which is made up of life's decisions. These decisions as a baby begin with the most rudimentary things, crying for attention, making messes, and they continue graduating into wanting things that are dangerous, or things belonging to others, and having temper tantrums. This behavior left to flourish on its own grows worse as the child grows into adolescence and beyond.

- It is essential the parent understands the nature of their children. That beautiful, cute little baby, could grow up to be a serial killer (some do), or a thief, a pervert, or merely a vile person characterized by wicked behavior. The question is – what makes the difference, and the answer is found in the Word of God.