

## Bible Study on The Christian Home – Handout 7

### *Developing a Christian Home Environment*

Grace Bible Chapel

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

##### ● **The Christian home atmosphere where children are present:**

- **Self-will and natural rebellion** - we have already discussed the matter of sin within every child. This sinful nature issues forth in self-will. A determination to rebel against authority, and to have one's own way. This self-will is not only detrimental to the child, but to the home environment.
  - This self-will is seen at a very early age in the form of crying, and intensifies into tantrums.
  - Parents giving into this manner of crying or tantrums foster the rebellion within the child and reinforce the child's ability to have their own way by crying and tantrums.
  - This kind of rebellion if unchecked will lead to development of a delinquent intolerable child.
  - When the child is acting in such a mode of defiance, it is not only upsetting within the non-content nature of the child, but is destructive to the peace of the home, other children, and parents.
  - Parents must understand that such behavior must be stopped for the benefit of the child (first) but also for the sanctity of the home.
- **The will of the child must be broken** and made submissive so they can function effectively. The Scripture commands children to obey their parents. The correction of the child (via rod with instruction) is the means God has given to systematically break the child's will.
  - Parents must not think that by causing the child's will to conform to the parent's will they are somehow ruining the child's psyche. The Word of God says just the opposite **"deliver their soul from Hell"** (Prov 23:14). Only by so doing will they be able to learn, and be productive.
  - The process of dealing with the will must begin early in the child before bad habits of self will are developed.
  - Depending on the constitution of the child, it may take extreme commitment, but it must be accomplished. The child will then act as a child, and further development can move forward.
  - Psalms 103:8 (here God as our Father is the example) – the Christian home must be characterized by warmth, and love while being a testimony of quiet control. A home where screaming, confusion, rebellious activity, and chaos exist is a home that is being manipulated by the children. The goal is the right proportions of discipline in love so that the graces of compassion, patience, and lovingkindness can be seen as the standard just as with our Lord.
  - Psalms 103:9 – God does not harbor anger or resentment. His discipline is measured so as to bring His own back to where they need to be. God doesn't kill us every time we do wrong (Ps 103:10), but is characterized by compassion (Ps 103:13-14) – so should it be with parents. The discipline is measured to bring the circumstances to correction, and then it is as though forgotten in restoration. Note, the sin is not ignored (God does not ignore ours if we are His – Heb 12:8), but neither does He carry it as such against us. He overlooks our terrible actions in His lovingkindness, and so should we in our children.
    - ▶ Proverbs 13:24 – discipline must always be considered an act of love. Our discipline must be vigorous but appropriate to the situation of restoration. It is not a means of venting frustration, but correction.
    - ▶ It must be done or we are as disobedient to God as Eli (1 Sam 2:29), but it must be done with the same example of love God has for His own, in obedience to Him, and with the good of the children in mind. Note that all these things will be true when exercised correctly.
- **Christ's attitude about the spiritual handling of children** (Mark 10:13-16) . This is a context of a volatile situation. The Pharisees are attempting to trap Christ by their carefully crafted questions. Questions designed to cause the people to dislike His answers. These are those who believed that salvation was something you earned by being religious and keeping rules. Christ overcomes their trap, and uses the circumstance of children to explain faith.
  - Children attempt to come to Christ and are rebuked by the well intentioned disciples. The prevailing attitude is that children are not important. What is Christ's attitude? Christ not only welcomes the children, but uses them to demonstrate simple faith clothed in humility, and that

those who will comprise the kingdom will be like the children (by contrast to the religious leaders who were filled with pride and self importance).

- There are other lessons we learn here as well:
  - ▶ Christ is angered (**indignant**) by the disciples preventing children coming in contact with Him.
  - ▶ This is one of only three occasions where Christ displayed this kind of forthright anger – it is showing His will and attitude concerning the handling of children.
  - ▶ Christ would state in Matthew 18:6 concerning those that cause “**little ones to stumble**” that it were better for them that a mill stone be placed about their neck and they be cast into the deep. The principle of being a hindrance to children, or misdirecting those new in the faith, troubling them, or hindering their relationship to God is of the greatest offenses.
  - ▶ There are two commands – stop hindering, and permit them to come.
  - ▶ As a parent, I must be sure I am rearing my children in such a manner that I am not hindering their relationship to Christ, and that I am instead fostering it or placing them in such an environment that permits them access to Him.
- As we apply this to parents and the Christian home, we see the incredible responsibility it places on parents. James addresses, “**let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that we will incur the stricter judgment**” (James 3:1). Every parent is a teacher of their own children. There is an awesome accountability and responsibility that each parent will give an account of before God.
- **Parents must establish themselves as continuous examples.**
  - The parent must become a righteous and skilled mentor for their children. This requires an investment of time and effort. However, much of the education process takes place as the children merely observe parents in day-to-day activities. The parent must understand the children’s eyes are always present taking impressions.
  - In past history when a person was to learn a trade, or perhaps take up the family business, they worked under mentoring as an apprentice. In time the person learning took on similar skills, or perhaps depending on ability even greater skills than their mentor.
  - Parents must establish the relationship with their children so they are mentoring them at every age, and continuously. If there are others intervening in this process (day care, schools, baby sitters, etc.), it is an intrusion into God’s intention for the upbringing of the children. Therefore as much as possible time away from mom and dad should be minimal, and carefully or particularly planned. This is one of the largest problems of bringing up children in our society. There are too many distractions, and too many mentors.
  - Where other mentors or other persons are delegated to be mentors for our children, we must be sure those mentors are working in harmony with the parents design for each child.
  - I must recognize the primary responsibility of mentoring is with the parents (Eph 6:4). This mentoring cannot be handed to anyone else, nor shunned as if I am just not cutout to be a parent. The child’s natural propensity will be to emulate the parents and especially in the early years. If others are basically rearing the children, all of the various signals will effect and take the children in various directions.
  - Personally as a parent mentor I must ask myself:
    - ▶ Am I hindering or fostering them toward Christ in what they see in me?
    - ▶ Do I truly set the example before them continuously as a man or women that loves the Lord?
    - ▶ Is my testimony wishy-washy or so poor they will sense hypocrisy?
    - ▶ What am I giving myself to in life? What is obviously my top priority? Parents must grow up to the responsibility and treat the circumstance as what it is, a stewardship from God.
  - Regarding others who are delegated to mentor my children:
    - ▶ Are they hindering or fostering them toward Christ?
    - ▶ Are they a good example before the children?
    - ▶ Is the atmosphere in which they are placed an environment I would want my children?
- **The parents example taken from the inspired Psalm (Ps 103:1-14).**
  - Psalm 103:1–5 - The first thing my children must see in their parents is a grateful heart. The great sin of which other sins fester (Romans 1) is an unthankful heart. The world is filled with unhappy complaining people who in effect are by their demeanor accusing God of not being good to them. David pours out his heart of gratitude in recognition that God is the source of all

good, and that all we have, and are is a blessing undeserved from His hand. Children should see their parents with grateful hearts. This begins with prayer at every meal, but it goes much further into all areas of activities, and ultimately how parents deal with life's trials and difficulties.

- ▶ You must rely upon God. You need continuous prayer for your strength, for guidance, for wisdom, and for the well being of your children. Dad and mom must be people of prayer. The children should see you pray, and hear you pray specifically for them.
- ▶ You will go through difficult times – illness, rebellion, things totally unexpected out of the blue. You must be ready to turn these over to the Lord, and press forward in wisdom and endurance.
- ▶ You need to demonstrate your relationship to God by being involved in church and the Christian community. The children must see this as a manner of life, as who dad and mom really are.
- ▶ You need the interaction with those who can counsel you (church elders, pastors, spiritual leaders, wise older women), and those of your own age who are going through similar situations and times. There is a need for “iron sharpening iron” (Prov 27:17).
- ▶ Proverbs 20:7 – Know this passage, and believe it.
- There is a repeated theme in this Psalm amidst the praise. The phrase is “**on those who fear Him**” (Ps 103:11; 13; 17). This is an obvious reference to God's own, who are characterized by an appropriate reverence for God in their lives. This first of all should be the characteristic of the Christian home. The home must be an atmosphere that reverences God. It should be in the literature, what is viewed on TV, and in conversation.
- This concept “**those who fear Him**” of particular emphasis also provides for us a parallel for parents. Just as God has a special relationship with His own, so do parents with their own children. God deals with His own particularly and differently than with all other creatures and a mother and father deal with their own children differently than all others. This relationship should be developed and understood by learning from God.
  - ▶ An understanding of the particular nature of our relationship with our children will keep us from buying into the norms of child rearing present in our perverse society.
  - ▶ The particular nature of our relationship with our children should cause us to mirror within our limited abilities, and prayerfully leaning on the Lord, the same kind of blessing, protection, and commitment as God has for His own.
- **The parents must rule in the home** (Ps 103:19). As God rules in sovereignty over all, the parents must rule in sovereignty over the Christian home with the father being the head, and the mother in union or agreement so that the parents are in harmony working as a team with the same goals, attitudes, and practices.
  - Many homes reflect chaos, and confusion. The children are allowed to run wild while the frustrated parents have bought into the manner of life and only react when their frustration level explodes.
  - God structures and controls all circumstances for our good. We are to do the same thing. The home must be a protected, fashioned environment. An environment where it is seen the parents are in charge, and doing those things that are righteous and appropriately Godly in focus, philosophy, and practice.
  - The rules of the home must be agreed upon by both parents, and enforced at all times. These should be rules developed from the wise platform of the Holy Bible. Do not establish rules of the home that are unreasonable, or rules you really do not expect to, or cannot maintain.
  - The manner of control must be attained so that when the parent expresses their will it requires an immediate response on behalf of the children. There can be no ignoring, “just a minute,” or “later mommy,” or “do I have to?”
  - This standard is kept in lovingkindness, and not in screaming, frustration, anger or desperation but none-the-less maintained in absolute consistent firmness – you must always be sticking to the values or rules clearly communicated.
  - The firmness and consistency required is to bring submission to the will of the parent, just as God brings submission to His will. Anything less is festering the situation, and reestablishing new boundaries or rules in the mind of the children.
    - ▶ Numbers 20:8 – Moses was given specific instructions, but he lost his temper and did not follow the instructions of the Lord. God teaches us from this situation.

- ▶ The same thing could be said of David when bringing the Ark the first time into Jerusalem. He did not follow instructions, and Uzza perished (1 Chron 13:9). The same could also be stated concerning King Saul (1 Sam 15:19-28). In all cases God was consistent, and in all cases the parents must be consistent in providing clear instructions, appropriate to the situation, and then expect those instructions to be precisely accomplished.
- ▶ When Moses did not follow instructions God still honored Moses publicly and graciously provided water. He dealt with Moses sin of not following instruction privately, and Moses was restored to God in grace. However, the consequences of his rebellion remained.
- ▶ Do not publicly humiliate your children – as much as you are able deal with them privately, but firmly and consistently. You cannot let matters go as though they did not occur. Children must be taught that every act of rebellion in life has consequences.
- **God as a Father and perfect mentor to all parents (Ps 103:13-14):**
  - Psalms 103:13 – As parents we need to live up-to the standard God has declared. We need to be compassionate (show them sympathy, understanding, pity). We must demonstrate a kind of love that is always under control and appropriately measured.
  - This is not what many parents do – they deride, act with resentment, ridicule, and take out their personal frustrations on their children. How often have parents openly declared: “their children are a pain in the neck,” or indicated in so many ways “my children are in my way.”
  - We must mirror the manner of God with our children. They must know that although we discipline them, we do so because we are doing what God would have us to do, and because we love them. True compassion is recognizing the dilemma of sin in the life of our children and showing genuine loving concern for them by dealing effectively with it. That is true compassion.
  - Psalms 103:14 – **“He Himself knows our frame, He is mindful that we are but dust.”** God knows precisely what we need and when we need it. The same should be true of the parent who thoughtfully pays attention, studies, prays, and considers their children. Rearing of children doesn’t just happen. It requires careful and wise consideration. We need to determine what is best for them spiritually, physically, emotionally at every age level. The ultimate objective is conformity to Christ.
  - Realize parent you have at best an 18 to 20 year program, maybe less. By the time they move into their mid-teens many of the foundational decisions constructing who they will be as a person have already been formed.
  - The compassion of the Lord extends to recognizing the limits and boundaries of us His children, and thereby as our example to our children. The parent recognizes their child is a sinner. He or she recognizes why the child acts the way they do and apportions discipline, encouragement, rebuke, love, correction, discussion, etc. all in accordance with their frame.
  - Age must be taken into account. To continue to treat a teenager like a baby is provoking the child to wrath, and on the other hand to treat a baby as an adult is doing the same. The parent must move up the scale of maturity with their handling of each child according to their age and status of maturity (Heb 5:12-13).
  - What are some things we as parents must consider?
    - ▶ We must know our children’s personality, their propensity to sin, and their ability. Under each analysis we must think in terms of how can I aid their development? Like our Heavenly Father does with us – we must be personally involved in development according to what is best for them for the goal of reaching their highest potential to be a blessing, and ultimately to honor God.
    - ▶ Recognize that each child is different. There are no cookie cutter rearing programs. Each child is unique and requires individualized attention.
    - ▶ The parent must not think of their child as the fulfillment of their personal expectations and goals, but according to their gifts, interests, abilities. Help them to discover what God has in store for them without pushing parental will in a direction that doesn’t match who they are.
    - ▶ The children must be developed to take personal responsibility, and even decision making. They must be taught how to make decisions based on the wisdom of God’s Word.
    - ▶ The spiritual condition of each child must be known and considered in their development. Are they yet unregenerate (Prov 20:11)? You must spend more time and effort nurturing them toward an understanding of Christ salvation, grace, their own condition, and the forgiveness that is found in Christ alone.