

“The Essentials Of Our Faith”

Session XXXVIII

August 7, 2011

“The Christian Family”

Part Seven: “The Purpose and Needs Of Children”

III. How Do Parents Provide These Needs?

A. Proverbs 22:6.

*“Train up a child in the way he should go,
Even when he is old he will not depart from it.”*

1. **A Promise:** This verse implies a powerful principle -- that parents are the **most important influence** in the life of a child!

--**Key:** This influence is based upon the **person I am!**

2. **A Danger:**

--We have already discussed the common misunderstanding or misinterpretation of this verse.

- a. Some parents think that the "influence" they have on their children comes from the things they "teach" verbally -- that their words make the impact!
- b. This is incorrect because it is not the "words" of a parent which leave a lasting mark on the child, but rather the inner character of the parent!
- c. Remember, we cannot deceive our children. They always know who and what we really are!

--**The danger:** **What we are is sometimes in conflict with what we say!**

A familiar expression warns,

"What you are speaks so loudly, I can't hear what you say!"

3. **Key Words:**

a. **"Train up":**

1) Hebrew word = chanak.

2) Meaning: There are two equally correct translations.

a) To **"train up"** means to **"initiate"**; to **"teach"**.

The root word means "a ground-breaking ceremony", therefore, "to start something"!

--A common practice of that day was to place sugar or honey on the palate of a child to "initiate" or "stimulate" sucking or eating!

b) To **"train up"** means to **"narrow"** or **"press in"**.

A clear picture is painted by this meaning – just like a river is directed by its two banks, so direction is provided by the presence of two parents, one on each side of the child, "narrowing" the way!

b. "Way he should go":

--This Hebrew phrase can be translated in two ways:

1) The first translation is the one given above →

*" . . . train up a child **in the way he should go.**"*

--the emphasis of this translation is on **"the way"** a child should go . . . God's "goals" or "objectives" for life.

--the parents are to "train" in **God's goals for life!**

2) The "alternate reading" or translation of the same Hebrew text is →

*" . . . train up a child **according to his way.**"*

--the emphasis of this translation is on **"the way"** of the child . . . the "way" God has made the child!

--the parents must "recognize" God's design in each child. All children are different! Each has his/her own "unique" design! This design will fit God's purpose for the child.

--Danger:

--Parents often fail to recognize God's design of their child → they think "all children are the same" and miss God's design in their child!

--Parents often have their own agenda for their child → they expect the child to fit into their "plans" or "expectations"! This is selfishness!

--Parents often do not trust God → that His plans and purposes for the child are "best"! This is unbelief!

4. Application:

a. It is extremely important for parents to work together → to be in agreement in the rearing of their children. Both parents are required to "narrow" the way of the child -- to "press in" so that the child is directed toward God's goals in life.

--When this "training" is not given, the child is left without needed direction and comes under negative "self" guidance or "outside" influence.

b. It is extremely important for parents to recognize God's design in each of their children. Too often parents reject a child who is "different" from them or different from what they wanted the child to be. This destroys the "self - worth" of the child and hinders God's purpose in their life.

B. Ephesians 6:4.

*"And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger;
but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."*

1. A Key Person:

- a. Both parents are responsible for meeting the "needs" of their children, however, the **"father"** is given the primary responsibility for oversight. He must be the leader in the rearing of the children.
--Warning: The Biblical design/model for childrearing breaks down if the father is not involved!
- b. The **"mother"** is to be in submission to the leadership of the father, working as his "helper" or "teammate". She is a key to harmony in the home and to "consistent" discipline of the children.
- c. The input of the mother is vitally important! A wise father will not attempt to rear the children without the insight and input of the mother. She has a special, God-given ability to know what is "good" for her children.
- d. In most families, the mother will spend more time with the children, but the father is responsible for what happens in the home, even when he is not present. This demands full cooperation and communication between the parents!
- e. Note: When the husband is "absent" from the home due to death or divorce, God gives a special measure of **"grace"** to the Christian wife who looks to Him for help. The local Church or "Assembly", where the family is involved, bears a special responsibility toward mothers rearing children without a father in the home.

*"This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father,
to visit orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained
by the world."*
James 1:27

2. The Specific Instructions:

- a. "Bring them up in the **discipline** . . ."
--The Greek word "discipline" ("nurture") = paideia.
--The meaning: "Training by act and discipline."
Originally, it meant *"instruction of children"*. *"It evolved to mean chastening, because all effectual instruction for the sinful children of men includes and implies chastening, correction."* --Spiros Zodhiates
--This word implies that the **father** takes the appropriate steps of corrective **action** to "train up" his children!
- b. "Bring them up in the discipline and **instruction** . . ."
--The Greek word "instruction"("admonition") = nouthesia.
--The meaning: "To put into the mind" by training.

"The training by a word of encouragement when it proves sufficient, but also by a word of remonstrance, reproof, blame, as required." –Zodhiates
--This word implies that the **father** uses his **words** to give **encouragement** when it is needed and **reproof** when it is needed!

3. Summary: The father gives guidance to his children by . . .

- a. Formal Instruction: The father "teaches" his children the truths of Scripture and life in a planned and structured way. He seeks to "put in the mind" the facts of truth!
- b. Informal Instruction: The father "teaches" his children the truths of Scripture and life in an unplanned and unstructured way. He takes advantage of the "teachable moments" in a child's life.

4. The Implied Principle: Ephesians 6:4 "implies" an unbreakable commitment, an unconditional commitment, on the part of the parents for the children.

--Statement: "There is nothing you can do to break or stop my love for you!"

--Warning: A parent must be sincere when this statement is said or implied to the child. Many children will "test" our commitment to them before they become adults or before life is over!

--Encouragement: There is no better picture of the love of God than the true love of a "father" for his children! God is called our "Father" (Eph 1:2) and we are encouraged to call Him "Father" (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6).

5. The Danger: Parents can permanently **damage** a child!

a. **Ephesians 6:4.**

"And, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath . . ."

1) Key word: "provoke" = parorgizo = "to anger alongside"

"to enrage, anger, provoke"

--This word is the combination of two Greek words:

para = "near", "from beside", "the vicinity of";

orgizo = "to provoke, enrage, exasperate".

--So the combination means "**to anger alongside**"!

2) The danger: To **wound the spirit** of a child!

"A joyful heart is good medicine,

but a broken spirit dries up the bones." (Prov. 17:22)

"The spirit of a man can endure his sickness,

but a broken spirit who can bear?" (Prov. 18:14)

--Note: A child is born with a God-given need to have the love and acceptance of both father and mother. When a father "breaks the spirit" of a child, that child replaces the need for love and acceptance with hurt and anger!

b. Colossians 3:21.

"Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart."

1) Key word: "exasperate" = erethizo = "to stimulate to anger"; "to provoke".

2) The danger: To cause a child to "**lose heart**"!

--"lose heart" = athumeo = "to be spiritless"; "to be disheartened".

3) Statement: "I give up! There is no need to try! Nothing I do will ever please you!"

IV. What Family Patterns "Break The Spirit" Of A Child?

A. Discipline In "_____":

--This Communicates: **Rejection** of the person!

1. When a child does wrong, the child needs correction! The wrong behavior or attitude must be corrected! This includes the "spanking" of younger children when it is needed (Proverbs 23:13)
2. However, the discipline of a child must not be done in **anger**! Discipline in anger causes a child to forget the real issue (the wrong behavior) and to remember the anger of the parent!

--Discipline in anger is a "sin"! It requires "forgiveness"!

B. "_____ " Discipline:

--This Communicates: **Uncertain standards** by parents!

1. "Inconsistent Discipline" means that the parents discipline in one way on one occasion, and another way on another occasion -- or, one parent disciplines in one way and the other parent in another way for the same offense.
2. Either of these patterns by the parents is **confusing** to the child. The child is caused to question if wrong behavior is wrong every time or if it is excusable on some occasions!

--Parents must be in "agreement" on family discipline!

C. Family "_____":

--This Communicates: **Lack of personal worth** to a child!

1. All children are different! Some are easier to love or to deal with than others! We tend to accept the children who are "like" us and to be distant to or to reject those who are not "like" us!
2. The Christian parent must know that each child is of **equal** value and ask God's help in dealing with each without **favoring** one over the other!

--How often I have heard an adult say, "My father or mother never loved me as much as my brother or my sister!"

D. A “_____” Standard:

--This Communicates: A **lack of integrity** in the parents' life!

1. A "double standard" means that parents have one set of rules or expectations for themselves and another for the children.

--Illustrations: Certain behavior is allowed by parents, but not by the children!

Certain words are used by parents, but are wrong for children!

Children are expected to go to Church, but the parents do not!

2. A "double standard" is **confusing** to children. They are likely to question if there are any "absolute" standards in God's Word. They wonder if Biblical behavior is expected of all Christians, young and old, or is there one expectation for adults and another for children and young people?

--**Children are very aware of "fairness" and "integrity" in their parents!**

E. “_____” Promises:

--Communicates: **Lack of personal worth** to the child!

1. Most children deeply desire the time and attention of their parents. When a parent, especially the father, makes a **promise** to the family or to an individual child, that promise is taken very seriously -- the child builds his/her expectation around the promise of the parent. Most children will begin to "live out" the promise -- they can't wait for the time to come! They "dream" about how much fun it will be!
2. In the activities and demands of life, many parents "forget" the promises they have made. To forget the promise or to "push it aside" is to neglect the child!
Note: We are not referring to a "one-time" failure to keep a promise, but to an established "pattern"! Children will forgive an infrequent failure!

F. Failure to “_____” Your Marriage Partner:

--Communicates: **Insecurity** to the child!

1. The greatest human source of "security" for a child is the love of parents -- their love for one another!
--The love of the parents for the child is very important. Every child needs to know he/she is loved by the parents!
--However, the deepest security for the child is based in the stability of the parents' relationship -- their love for one another. While a child rarely can express this in words, the child has an unconscious sensitivity to the reality and stability of the parents' relationship.
2. When the child is aware that Mother and Father love each other, he/she will have the needed foundation for security in life. If the child senses that Mother and Father do not love each other, the foundation of security will be deficient or entirely missing!

V. What Are The Steps To Healing A "Wounded Spirit"?

A. When I Realize I Have Hurt My Child:

1. I must **"confess"** my sin to God!

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I John 1:9

--"confess" = homoiogeo = "to speak the same"; "to say the same thing"

--Meaning: To "agree" with God -- to "say what He says" about my sin!

(See Psalm 51 and 32)

2. I must **"confess"** my sin to the one I hurt -- my child!

"In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men." Acts 24:16

- a. Paul knew that a "blameless conscience" began with confession of sin to God. He followed the instruction of I John 1:9 to get God's "forgiveness" and "cleansing".
- b. A "blameless conscience" **"before men"** was also very important to Paul. He knew it was the basis of a powerful testimony! He desired that no person be able to point an accusing finger of blame at him. So, he attempted to keep a "clear" or "blameless conscience" **with other people!**
--When parents sin against their children and "break their spirit", the parent must seek God's forgiveness, then the child's forgiveness!

3. I must **change the hurtful behavior!**

- a. My sincere words of asking forgiveness will be empty and meaningless if I do not follow them up with new patterns of behavior!
- b. How? Gal. 5:16, 22-23 → The "fruit" of the Holy Spirit produced in my life!
In the place of the "hurtful" behavior, the "fruit" of the Holy Spirit is produced showing Christ in me!

B. When I Am The Person Who Was Hurt By Parents:

1. I must **"confess"** that my hurt is a sin, if I am holding on to it!

". . . do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity." Eph. 4:26-27

2. I must recognize the **"danger"** of a **root of bitterness!**

"See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble and by it many be defiled." Heb. 12:15

3. I must **obey** God and **forgive** those who have hurt me!

"And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." Eph. 4:31-32

4. I should consider taking an **action step** to demonstrate forgiveness!

"Walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself for you." Eph. 5:2