
If I Were a Parent

Radio Message by Dwight Porter, D.D.

We have met many people who have told us how to do the job when they are not personally involved in the struggle. Monday quarterbacking makes all of us an authority as to how the game should have been played. It is an easy practice without the sweat and agony of endeavoring to win on the field of battle. "This is what I would do if I were a parent."

This writer is not separated from his subject matter. I have one son who is happily married and has presented me with four fine grandchildren. It did not take me more than one year in the ministry to see the devastating affect of wayward children upon the parents. My drive for success with my own responsibility started long before I met the mother of my child.

For you, who still have the opportunity to rear bright, keen and spiritually sharp young people, here is some counsel and encouragement. As long as your children live with you, the greatest influence upon their life can and should be coming from their home. Parents, you only have about five to eight years to blow it! About twelve years of age you will have little influence unless you have earned and deserve it long before that age.

Training children is not left to our ability or ingenuity. One does not have more of an innate ability in influencing their children than another. God's blueprint for the rearing of children does not change from one family to another. We are told by God to produce an atmosphere of discipline and encouragement, with the source of such standards coming from the Lord Himself. "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). We are to practice Biblical direction and it should be taught and demonstrated by the parents before their children.

God knew the value of such instruction as revealed in His direction to the parents of Israel. "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates" (Deut. 6:6-9).

Notice the consequence of this action in the next verses: "And it shall be, when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildest not. And houses full of all good things which thou tilledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not: when thou shalt have eaten and be full" (Duet. 6: 10-11).

The next verse gives a stern warning of the possibility of forgetting the God who provided such blessing. "Then beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage" (Deut. 6:12).

The principles of direction to parents in the Old Testament remain the same for our day. Parent's actions have a tremendous bearing upon their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me" (Exodus 20:5). God's judgment upon sinful parents continues upon the innocent for generations. Some say, that is not right! Sin and its consequences are never right. Sin takes a dreadful toll upon the innocent. It is time for parents to awaken to God's warnings.

The success or failure to obey God's instruction as a parent will be evident within the lives of their children. Parents have a tremendous responsibility for their future. God's Word is clear and plain on this subject. "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, let thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons" (Duet. 4:9).

"O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" (Duet. 5:29). "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, and faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations" (Deut. 7:9)

Tragedy follows in the lives of children reared by parents who thought their only responsibility was to house, feed and give them enough moral guidance to keep them out of jail.

Biblical instruction reveals the danger of provoking our children. "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4) "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged" (Col 3:2 1). Frustrated parents delight in having complete control over their children. Often such control goes to their head as they communicate personal frustrations to their little ones by their action and reaction. How sad to observe so many parents either ignoring or smothering their children. God help us to back off and see our children as they are, rather than the emotional dreamy-eyed concept of what we want them to be.

Child Development

1. Read to them at a very early age.
2. Teach them to read—make sure they know how by the end of the second or third grade.
3. Teach them personal discipline.
4. Teach them the value of hard work.
5. Demand absolute obedience.
6. Set goals for them—make sure they are accomplished.
7. Maintain constant learning.
8. Teach them to get along with other children.
9. Demand absolute honesty—obedience to the law.
10. Keep a constant challenge before them.
11. Teach them good health—keep them away from junk food.
12. Teach them spiritual habits—be an example of the same.
13. Give them parental demonstration of all direction given.
14. Teach them self expression.
15. Communicate with them.
16. Teach respect for authority.
17. Enjoy them.
18. Teach them self respect.
19. Demand their involvement in daily conversation.
20. Lead them into a personal intimacy with the Lord
21. Show them respect and confidence.

Parental Responsibility

1. I will do my utmost at an early age to teach my children God's plain provision for Salvation.
2. Realizing that God had given me absolute authority over my children, I will completely control them: for I have the greatest responsibility for their obedience. "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord" (Col. 3:20)
3. I will listen to their conversation closely to learn their disposition and outlook upon life. Then only will I be in a position for corrective action.
4. My children will know of my personal prayers and Bible reading that I may teach them by example.
5. I will demonstrate affection and respect to my marriage partner in the presence of my children.
6. They will learn the value of money as our entire family discusses an occasional financial investment.
7. At the earliest age possible I will teach my children to begin a systematic personal savings practice.
8. With the Lord's help my children shall be reared in a happy and contented home, realizing that most children will reproduce in their own home the reflection of the one they left.
9. My children will learn that every church service is important including Sunday evening and Wednesday prayer service.
10. Their spiritual welfare is far more important than any other part of their development. This priority will be shown by making sure of their personal involvement in all spiritual programs for their ages in the church we attend. Their presence will be one of the most important items in our family schedule.
11. My children shall learn that money is only a means to an end. They shall not grow up thinking a job or earning money is the most important thing of this earth. By our living standard, financial support of the lord's work, and priorities of time and energy, my children will realize by example that which is truly valuable in the sight of God.
12. My children will be reared by parents who need no crutch to live on. They will not see their parents taking pills in order to keep up with the daily issues of life. No habit that is harmful to the body or contrary to God's standards will be paraded before them.
13. Carefully will I guard what goes into the mind and heart of my children. They will not be introduced to the filth of Hollywood, in the theatre or on TV. Their friends shall be carefully chosen by us parents as early and as long as possible.
14. I shall expect absolute obedience from my children who will notice this same position in their parents before God.
15. Realizing the dreadful toll of worldly entertainment. I will teach my children the evil of Rock and Roll music and direct them to music that edifies rather than destroys the nervous system and produces frustrated lies.
16. My children will not be reared in a home that uses screaming threats and warnings. We will not raise our voices unless the house is on fire!

17. Realizing that sloppy dress reflects sloppy attitudes, our entire family will dress to match our testimony which calls for modesty and that which reflects the One we are living for.
18. I will prepare my children for the greatest responsibility during their lifetime—MARRIAGE. I will teach them by example the kind of mother or father they should be.
19. Realizing the value of success in young lives. I will praise my children more than I find fault with them. I will communicate confidence to them and be surprised at any rebellion against their parents.

Soon fifty percent of America's children will be reared without their natural father present. Already this is taking a dreadful toll in crime and teen-age pregnancies. God has a special distinctive ministry coining from parents. No one replaces either for the children. (I know the consequences of living in a home without a mother. My brother and sister also know. Mother died when I was about eleven years of age. My sister was ten and my brother was six.)

Parents, you only possess a few years in which to win your children's heart. Will yours grow to respect highly the God of their parents? Or will the influence outside of the home be able to break down their moral and Spiritual standards? God is going to bless the home He has control over. This action begins with father, then mother. We now have a generation who had little or no Godly influence in their home. We see the consequence everywhere. Will your home be an exception?

Additional free copies of this message are available. It is a reprint from our free publication, THE CHALLENGER. Also, available are nine free lessons of our free Home Bible Study Course.

The Hour of Grace & Power
PO Box 5900
Titusville, FL 32783-5900
www.thehourofgraceandpower.org