

Raising
GODLY

Children

In

SODOM

By

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CHAPTER ONE

SODOM AND GOMORRAH

Ancient Syrian cities Sodom and Gomorrah were situated in the Jordan Valley. When Lot, Abraham's nephew, lived there with his immediate family, heavenly fire consumed the cities (Genesis 19:24). The evil of the city of Sodom became legendary. Sodomy was a crime against the natural world that was typically connected to idolatry. To warn those who reject the faith in God, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is presented as an example (Matthew 10:15; 11:24; 2 Peter 2:6; Jude 1:7). The word is used in its typical context in Revelation 11:8. Most likely, Sodom was situated on the now-submerged plain south of the Dead Sea.

Sodom And Gomorrah In the Bible

The Bible's sorrowful account of Sodom and Gomorrah serves as a reminder of how much God detests sin. The two angels who visited Abraham together with the Lord were disguised as three men, were sent to Sodom and Gomorrah. The Lord informed Abraham that he would demolish the city because of the crimes of the inhabitants. In addition, God promised Abraham that if he could only locate ten good people, he would spare them and spare Sodom and Gomorrah.

When the two angels reached Sodom and Gomorrah, a man by the name of Lot invited them to rest at his house. Lot's home was then visited by some city men who requested of him, to deliver the two guests so that they may engage in sexual contact with them. Lot, in order to defend and safeguard the two angels, offered the men his only two daughters who were virgins in their place. The angry men tried to enter Lot's house, but the angels inflicted them with blindness and escorted Lot and his family out of the city.

What Do We Know About Sodom?

Sodom, whose name means “to burn” in Hebrew language, and “burning” in Greek, was close to Siddim Valley city. (Genesis 13:10; 14:1-16). Due to the residents’ immorality, heavenly fire descended upon it, destroying it (Genesis 18:16-33; 19:1-29; Deuteronomy 23:17). The Bible regularly makes reference to this city and the horrible catastrophe it experienced (Deuteronomy 29:23; Isaiah 1:9 Isaiah 1:10; Jeremiah 23:14; Ezekiel 16:46-5; Zephaniah 2:9; Matthew 10:15; Romans 9:29; 2 Peter 2:6, etc.). There is no evidence of it or the other plain cities because they were utterly obliterated. Jebel Usdum, or “the hill of Sodom,” is a group of low hills that constitute a mass of mineral salt on the southwest shore of the Dead Sea, directly across from the site of Zoar. Based on this and other considerations, it was decided that the southernmost point of the Dead Sea was where the cities of the plain were situated. On the other hand, some contend that they were at the furthest northerly point of the ocean.

What Do We Know About Gomorrah?

Gomorrah is Hebrew word for “submergence”. It was one of the five Siddim Plain cities that were completely destroyed by fire (Genesis 10:19, 13:10, 19:24, 19:28). These cities were most likely close to one another and the current Dead Sea’s northernmost point. Sodom and this city, both of which were displays of impiety and depravity, are frequently named following one another (Genesis 18:20; Romans 9:29). As an “example unto others who should later live ungodly,” their oblivion is noted (2 Peter 2:6; Jude 1:4-7). Their brutality became renowned (Deuteronomy 32:32; Isaiah 1:9 Isaiah 1:10; Jeremiah 23:14). But that evil might be surpassed (Matthew 10:15; Mark 6:11).

One of the CITIES OF THE PLAIN was destroyed by fire from heaven while Lot, Abraham’s nephew, lived there (Genesis 19:23-29). It was most likely situated on the now-submerged plain south of the Dead Sea. Others, however, place the Cities of the Plain at Khumran (or Gumran), which is indicated on the Survey Map of

Palestine north of Ras Feshkeh and has remains about a mile from the Dead Sea, which is located at the northern end of the Dead Sea. However, other than a tenuous resemblance in name and flimsy reasoning locating the Cities of the Plain at that end of the sea, there is no evidence to support this theory.

The Sin of Sodom And Gomorrah

Genesis 19:1-3.

Lot appears to have picked up a lot from his uncle Abraham. Lot follows in the footsteps of Abraham, who went out of his way to extend hospitality to these very angels in the preceding chapter. His kindness serves as evidence of his righteous character. Because “he pressed them forcefully” to stay with him, where they would be protected from the rest of the Sodomites, Lot is perceived to be a kind man. It’s also a good thing, given how the Sodomites treat the angels, even while they are living under Lot’s home.

Genesis 19:4-5.

Every single male resident of the city is referenced in the next verse, if you read these lines attentively. There weren’t just a few of them; they weren’t even the majority, but “..... all the people from every quarter.” Abraham prayed that the city would be spared if only ten righteous men were found there, but all of the men, save for Lot, are complicit in Sodom’s immorality. Even if Lot’s actions toward the Sodomites in the following verses are repugnant, they are meant to contrast with the horrible sin of the rest of the inhabitants of Sodom.

Genesis 19:6-9.

It is disgusting that Lot would advocate for the males of the city to kidnap and rape his own daughters! Surely, Lot wasn't making a serious offer with this? Though he was. Lot's level of righteousness was revealed by this insane request. There is no doubt that Sodom's characters have rubbed on Lot and made him unfit for a true righteous man. Some of Israel's most formidable foes descended from Lot's incestuous relationships with his own daughters, as we will discover later in the chapter. Lot is not intended to serve as an example. The key is that the Sodomites rejected his abhorrently terrible offer because of a bigger evil. It amazes me that some individuals continue to support homosexuality as a morally acceptable lifestyle. The Bible says this is worse than a father giving his daughters up as sacrifices for his lust since the Sodomites are trying to have sex with these guys, who are truly angels! There isn't anything wickeder than that!

All sin is rebellion against God and worthy of His judgment, but the sin of Sodom had gotten so severe that they could not contain their lust.

The decline into slavery to sin is described by Paul in Romans 1:18-32.

- ☼ First man decides to “suppress the truth” and disregard God’s holiness (verses 18-20).
- ☼ Second, he refuses to praise or respect God (verse 21a).
- ☼ As a result, his heart becomes hardened and his thinking becomes meaningless (verse 21b).
- ☼ Fourth, he develops a fool’s mind and starts worshiping things other than God (verses 22-23).
- ☼ Once people lose their sense of reasoning, they begin acting foolishly, especially by giving in to their heart’s desires (verses 24-25).
- ☼ When they engage in gay behavior, this lust intensifies (verses 26-27).

☼ As a result, “every manner of unrighteousness” results (verses 28-31).

☼ Finally, exhort others to follow in their footsteps (verse 32).

At this point, Sodom and Gomorrah had completed the process. They were openly engaging in homosexual behavior and demanding that any man passing through their town join them in this degrading behavior. The angels only needed to see this to understand that the cities had to be destroyed. Destruction awaits a person, a family, a city, a state or a nation that condones or engages in sodomy.

What Was the Significance of Sodom And Gomorrah?

Early the next morning, Abraham returned to the spot where he had previously stood before the Lord. He looked down over Sodom and Gomorrah and the whole plain and saw dense smoke rising from the ground, like smoke from a furnace (Genesis 19:27-28). Abraham, the father of nations whom God has ordained, stands there in the early morning, where he had pleaded with God earlier that day to spare the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah from Divine vengeance (Genesis 18:16-33). The Lord had heard the “outcry” against their sin, and He was ready to exact His holy retribution on these towns (Genesis 18:20).

“Will you eliminate the righteous along with the unrighteous?” Was the first request Abraham made to God the night before, as the fate of these cities rested in his hands. “What if the city has fifty righteous people? Will you destroy it (Genesis 18:23–24) without giving a thought to the fifty righteous people who live there?”

Even after his anticipation of at least 50 honest people was cut to only ten, Abraham continued to pray to the One True God since there were certainly some honorable and upright people residing in Sodom and Gomorrah. Actually, there were his nephew Lot and his family.

However, the opportunity for intercession this morning has passed, and he can already see enough of evidence of destruction in the area in front of him. As heavy smoke, “like smoke from a furnace,” blankets the distant sky over the plains, Abraham understands with a dejected certainty that not even ten people worshipped the Lord God there.

As Abraham witnesses the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah—nothing survives, not even people or vegetation—he is undoubtedly struck by the finality of God’s punishment (Genesis 19:25). The previous inhabitants of the cities are not only utterly eliminated from the world because of their ongoing disobedience against their Creator, but they are also permanently cut off from God’s presence (Romans 6:23, 2 Thessalonians 1:9).

Interesting Facts About Sodom And Gomorrah

- ☼ In addition to sexual crimes, Sodom and Gomorrah’s residents faced additional issues. The Sodomites and everyone in the surrounding plains are described in Jude 7 as arrogant sexual perverts. The residents were selfish and showed no concern for those in need. Your sister Sodom committed this fault; she and her daughters were haughty, arrogant, and heartless; they neglected the weak and the needy (Ezekiel 16:49).
- ☼ The immorality of Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed Lot’s wife and sons-in-law. The local men Lot’s daughters were vowed to marry were promised salvation from God’s vengeance (Genesis 19:12-13). Lot pleaded with them to leave, but the fools laughed instead (Genesis 19:14). Perhaps even more tragically, Lot’s wife was changed into a pillar of salt when she turned to look at the devastation of her home (Genesis 19:26).
- ☼ The story of these cities demonstrates that Abraham’s prayers were the direct cause of Lot’s benevolence. Abraham’s prayers and requests were answered. So, when the plains cities were destroyed, God thought of Abraham and saved Lot from the disaster that had destroyed the cities where Lot had lived (Genesis 19:29). Oh, the strength a saint has when he or she prays! (James 5:16).

☼ The Sodomites turned down numerous opportunities to seek the Living God. Abram has already saved these wicked people (Genesis 14:14-16). The Sodom king had seen Abram and Melchizedek glorifying God (Genesis 14:17-20). Lot was a good man who lived among them (although a very weak man of God). They had access to the Truth during these discussions but decided to disregard it. Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction serves as a vivid reminder of what happens when people disobey God. God sent His Son to bridge the chasm between His righteousness and our sinfulness. Jesus bore all of our sins on the Cross in order to reconcile us to God. He rose from the dead three days after His crucifixion and defeated death once and for all.

Each one of us falls short of God's holiness (Romans 3:23), but God provided a way out by sacrificing His son, Jesus, to be the propitiation, or atonement, for our sin (Romans 6:23). Continued rejection of Christ will result in death and destruction (Matthew 10:33, Mark 8:38, Matthew 25:31-46) as well as an outpouring of Divine wrath even more terrifying than that experienced by Sodom and Gomorrah.

CHAPTER TWO

SODOM LIKE CITIES TODAY

Our end-of-the-world conditions in New York and Paris are reminiscent of Lot's days and the culture of Sodom. Lot's days could also be described as productive and prosperous, resulting in an excess of idle time, similar to the situation in New York and Paris right now. Residents of Sodom, like many of our own citizens, were so preoccupied with themselves that they were unaware of the perilous state of their future. We should develop the habit of being wary, frequently taking the moral temperature of society as well as our own spiritual well-being, and comparing our actions to those of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, it is nearly impossible to completely flee the tentacles of the modern equivalent of Sodom and Babylon, but we have a mandate to flee, as Moses, David, and Elijah had to leave quickly. Even if we were able to flee to the wilderness, we would still have to contend with our own carnal human nature. Even though we have our citizenship in heaven, we must live in the world as ambassadors rather than residents, protected and sanctified by the truth.

We stand out like a sore thumb because we are not of this world. Leaving Babylon entails changing our previous behaviors, as well as our thoughts and attitudes, replacing carnal behavior with spiritual behavior, obeying and mimicking Jesus Christ, and being transformed into His image. We become witnesses to the world in this way. Unfortunately, Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom, the most degenerate place in the entire land, in order to become wealthy. Unlike Lot, we must avoid worldly temptations such as drugs, sex, alcohol, pornography, and even excessive devotion to our careers in order to maintain our roles as sojourners and pilgrims. If we try to blend in, as

Lot did, our minds will be tainted by our surroundings. Even if it is the lesser of two evils, it is still evil.

To demonstrate how twisted our society has become, our country allows the slaughter of millions of unborn children while jailing a man for six months for killing a hummingbird. According to a Reader's Digest article on animal rights, one authority extolled the equality of all created things, saying that a rat is a pig is a dog is a boy. According to the article, some people believe that the slaughter of six million roasting chickens is the modern equivalent of Hitler's Holocaust. I believe we are all aware, and statistical evidence is not required, that parenting has hit rock bottom. Marriage is extinct in America. Every year, fewer and fewer people marry, and an increasing number of people remain single; they cohabitate. The majority of children born in our country today are born outside of marriage, outside of the home where God intended for them to be nurtured and cared for in order for them to thrive and keep society sane.

However, we live in a culture in which virtually all taboos have been abolished. Unless it is the abuse of another person, there is almost nothing wrong. Abuse appears to be the popular and operative word for all crimes that elicit any kind of societal reaction. Apart from that, there does not appear to be any moral obligation for anyone, especially in the area of sexuality or child rearing. If you look up spanking, you'll find that the internet will gladly tell you that it borders on child abuse, if not child abuse, and should be considered a crime. Biblical morality, on the other hand, is forbidden. Biblical morality is condemned. It is taxing. There is far too much pressure. It is overly legalistic. It restricts people's freedoms and stifles their desires and will they say. As a result, biblical morality has no place in our society.

Fornication, sexual sin, adultery, sexual sin in all its forms, even commercials. You cannot avoid seeing sexual sin, including homosexuality, portrayed in front of you. Gender confusion, homosexuality, and transgender behavior all strike a fatal blow at the issue of human sexuality, corrupting marriage and, obviously,

corrupting the raising of children. Our society frowns on and rejects male leadership. It is a crime of all crimes for a man to think of himself as the head of the family, the head of the house. For a generation, men have been assaulted and stripped of any societal expectation of family leadership. Women are more concerned about circular work. They have rejected the home as the place where a woman can live her life and thrive. She has now returned to work. So, you have the well-known latchkey kids, who must be part of the discussion right now as our country's leaders discuss opening up everything. If they don't open all the schools at the same time, they open all the workplaces, there will be children in school while their parents are still at home, which would be a strange reversal of history. As we saw in July 2021. If they don't provide for children at school when the adults return to work, you'll have kids at home all day. Who is going to look after them? This is a microcosm of the alienated family, the alienated husband and wife, and the alienated children, magnified to extreme proportions.

Dominant media, dominant social media, pornography in everyone's hand on a cell phone; abortion – ten million children are slaughtered each year; and ubiquitous pornography. Children are being injected with drugs. I was speaking with a gentleman who runs a Christian camp for churches to bring their young people to. He claims that 75% of all the kids who come in are on medication - junior high and high school students.

Now, the culture provides no solution to this. The church is the only hope. We are the future's only hope for true civilization, for any kind of normal culture, for any kind of safe culture. Only the church provides answers to the chaos of sexuality, sexual sin, marriage, divorce, and family corruption. Only the church, and only the church that offers the Word of God, individual salvation, and obedience to God's Holy Word. People flourish personally in their marriages and families when they are in Christ and follow the Word of God.

We discussed wisdom as it is found in the book of Proverbs, and I'd like to expand on that a little bit today by considering parenting with a couple of very basic foundational realities. So, let's go through them one by one.

First thing, marriage is the greatest blessing in life. Marriage is ordained by God as the normal pattern for life, and the apostle Paul refers to it as the grace of life. Marriage is the cherry on top of everything else in life; it is the best that life has to offer. So, we begin by acknowledging that marriage is the grace of life. Marriage is such a magnificent grace that it serves as a symbol of the relationship between the living Lord Jesus Christ and His redeemed church; and this is evident in Ephesians chapter 5. So, we begin with marriage as the most sacred, fulfilling, beautiful, productive, satisfying, and beautiful of all human-to-human healthy relationships; the most enriching, joyful, and meaningful relationship.

Second thing to think about: Children are a blessing from the Lord. Children are not accidental. They are not conceived in the womb to be snuffed out in the womb as if they were merely a human choice. Children are from the Lord. Listen to what it says in Genesis 1:28 regarding Adam and Eve: "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it." King James Version. This is a command from God. And God was involved in the fulfillment of that command.

Where are we headed? What kind of morals and values are we planting to give shade to the next generation? Scripture is certainly clear when it speaks of our responsibility to our children.

The first birth in human history is recorded in Genesis 4:1. Adam "And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD." Notice that the Lord was the source of this child. When Eve gave birth to Seth she said, "....., God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew." (Verse 25). She saw her children as gifts from God.

When the Lord blessed Leah with children because she was unloved by Jacob, she recognized His gracious blessing. Of Reuben she said, “..... Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction” (Genesis. 29:32), and of Simeon she said, “Because the LORD hath heard I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also.” (verse. 33). God gave her children so she could enjoy their love even when she had none from her husband.

Proverbs 23:24 says, *“The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.”* But how is it that in spite of God’s design for children to bring joy, happiness, contentment, satisfaction, and love to their parents, they so often become a heartbreak instead? Marriages and families that ought to be filled with peace, joy, and contentment are more often characterized by conflict, intimidation, and estrangement. Homes tend to be war zones rather than havens. We are raising a generation of people exposed to an evil sun, unprotected by any kind of proper, God-ordained standard of living.

What can we do to raise Godly children in Sodom? The apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:4. But before he gives us our responsibilities, he gives the children a few commands: *“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth”* (verses. 1-3).

God calls all children to be obedient and respectful to their parents. Obedience is the act; honor is the attitude. Neither come naturally, however. The Minnesota Crime Commission acknowledged that when it issued this report appointed by the governor back in 1926:

“Every baby starts life as a little savage. He is completely selfish and self-centered. He wants what he wants when he wants it: his bottle, his mother’s attention, his playmate’s toys, his uncle’s watch, or whatever. Deny him these and he seethes with rage and aggressiveness which would be murderous were he not so helpless. He’s dirty, he has no morals, no knowledge, and no developed skills.

This means that all children, not just certain children but all children, are born delinquent. If permitted to continue in their self-centered world of infancy, given free into their impulsive actions to satisfy each want, every child would grow up a criminal, a thief, a killer, a rapist.”

CHAPTER THREE

KIND OF PARENTS FOR THE JOB

Parents who are fit for the job are those who are free of the corruption of this unsavory or perverse generation. That is, they are free of the influences of cities like Sodom. They are lilies growing in mud that has yet to be stained. That is, they have survived rigorous testing, tempests, and storms unleashed by Sodom-like cities and are still standing. This type of parent is disciplined by what is right rather than what is popular. Above all, they recognize the Creator and are born again.

Before we can properly teach our children, we must be “living in the light of the Holy Book,” that is, they must be free of influence of cities like Sodom, and giving God’s Way top priority in our lives. How much do we appreciate His values? What importance do we place on our Christian calling and understanding of the truth? What about fellowshiping with His people, being a part of His Work, and supporting His ministry?

Recognize that because we are their parents and He lives in us, our children have particular access to God (I Corinthians. 7:14). If we don’t use and develop it, we cut ourselves off from Him, which means we won’t be ready and we will be unable to instruct our kids. In the long term, poor instruction has a negative impact on how God interacts with our children in the future. As a result, we must diligently study the Bible on our own, fulfill the directives found therein, and battle the attitudes of the devil. We set our children up to follow in our footsteps later in life when the Spirit fills our minds and we count living a Christian life as a delight.

In Timothy's family, the apostle Paul saw this: "When I call to mind the unfeigned faith that is in you, which dwelled first in your grandmother Lois, and I am sure that in you likewise." (II Timothy. 1:5).

We are in glass homes as parents. Even at a young age, our children monitor what we do and pick up lessons from what we do. We should provide an example for our children by demonstrating how God's Way brings wealth, peace, joy, and contentment. The Christian life was never meant to be difficult (John 10:10). We must fervently hold on to the truth and live it out if we are to instruct our children to obey God.

Two Trees

We ought to maintain things straightforward while instructing our kids. The two trees in the Garden of Eden, the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which stand for the GIVE way and the GET way, respectively, are one of the most fundamental lessons they should learn. We are able to distinguish between these diametrically opposed ways of living with the help of the Holy Spirit. With God's assistance, we can more shrewdly make decisions that lead to happiness, collaboration, respect for one another, and peace.

James 3 explains both approaches. First, there is GET, which states, "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." (Verses. 14-16).

The knowledge that comes from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. These are the results of the way of GIVE shown in verses 17–18. And those who make peace reap the benefits of righteousness. Whenever possible, show your kids how to distinguish between these two different approaches. Confusion and all ill work come with GET. "Peace" is brought

through GIVE. Daily situations like playmate fights, following rules, being considerate of others, being honest, respecting other people's property, and so on can be used as teaching opportunities. Such a list might be practically endless.

Teach your kids that obeying God brings blessings. God, for instance, always speaks the truth. Your child will get the respect and trust of his instructors and peers if he follows suit. Show him that “yes” means “yes” and “no” means “no” by setting an example for him (Matthew. 5:37). Your children will come to respect you if you continuously show them the right kind of affection.

God desires our obedience and respect, and we desire to instill these qualities in our offspring.

Being like Christ is being godly. Jesus modeled for us how to please the Father, submit to His will, and take on the characteristics of the Father. You must be a godly role model for your children if you wish to raise them to be godly people.

Godly parenting is interacting with your children in a way that most closely parallels Jesus' teachings and way of living. You must seek, rely on, and live through Christ, which is SANTIFICATION, if you want to raise your children in a way that pleases God.

“One generation planted the trees, and the next enjoys the shade,” says an old Chinese saying. You and I still enjoy the benefits of the trees that our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents planted for shade. Their moral code and devotion to their religion have an impact on us in various ways. The question is, “What kind of trees are we planting now that we have the shovel in our hands to protect future generations from what may be the scorching heat of an Antichrist-dominated world?” Do we entirely absolve ourselves from protecting our kids? It's obvious that the morals, values, and ethics of our culture are degrading. Even the systems we rely on are complicated, off-balance, and at odds with God's divine plan.

By giving their children the required wisdom, knowledge, and information, parents are the guides who must assist them in positively navigating life. Instilling important life lessons may encourage kids to grow up to be decent, honorable, and prosperous people.

The Bible offers guidance, and useful advice on how to raise godly kids, and answers to the problems that lay at the heart of broken families. One of my all-time favorite verses is Psalm 112:1-2. *“Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.”* The generation of the righteous will be blessed, and their descendants will possess great power in the country. God has given us some rules for raising children and providing for them. The Bible states, *“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.”* (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

Parenting is, in my opinion, our greatest delight, privilege, and duty (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

Hannah was aware of God’s purpose for her and her son. Every child is a gift from God that must be given back to Him. Many parents fall short in raising their kids because they don’t understand the value of having a purpose. What wishes do you have for your kid? Which comes first: prosperity, good health, celebrity, or success? God’s Word should be the source of the highest aspiration: “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” (3 John 4). Our top priority should be to raise our kids to love the Lord, walk in His ways, and serve Him.

She didn’t say a single prayer before ceasing. She was adamant. She was skilled at having patience with God. Good-intentioned parents frequently lose the fight due to laziness. There will be times when you feel worn out and like a failure, yet the Bible exhorts us to keep going. However, those who rely on the Lord will experience renewed strength. Consider Isaiah 40:31a. Be quiet and patiently await the Lord. Psalm 37:7. Persistence is a quality that cannot be replaced

by facts or strategies. The effort required to raise virtuous children is worth it, but there is no fast fix or lazy way to do it.

Hannah now understood the importance of her influence. She took her job as a mother seriously, even though she gave Samuel back to God to serve Him. Because she understood that “a job well begun is half done,” she loved and raised her child during his early years. The history was changed by this woman. In his mother’s heart, Samuel’s career as a prophet of the Lord began. She stayed by his side, rocked him, sang to him, and showed him her love. She made a difference in this kid’s life for the Lord. Never undervalue your influence over your kids. But not in the same way that Sodom did, God has put you in their life to raise them.

“The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.”

(Proverbs 29:15) King James Version.

It’s time to act and start becoming the godly parents that God wants us to be (born-again parents). Many parents make an effort to raise their children in a good and godly manner, but it can be challenging in today’s world with all of its perilous influences and traps (like Sodom and Gomorrah) and numerous demands on our kids. As parents, it is our duty to keep an eye on, pray for, love, discipline, and mentor our kids. Before they are even born, we should begin to love and pray for them, and our relationship with them should only deepen. For our children, we must have a gentle, unwavering love.

If people feel our affection for them, they will pay attention to our advice and direction. Children struggle to know how to love when they don’t feel it themselves. They need to learn. Giving a child what they need rather than what they want is what unconditional love entails. It is necessary to accept the youngster without conditions, regardless of their misbehavior. Despite our disagreements, we must accept their acts. They must be aware that they can turn to us for help at any time. Love that is unconditional is more than simply words. It

needs to be stated, but it also needs to be seen. For our kids to get the right hugs and affection, they need to experience physical affection. Even though your adolescent boy may appear to be too big to accomplish it, he will. The Bible mentions it. Luke 15:20 states that when the prodigal son came home, his father fell on his neck, gave him a hug, and kissed him. Love is the best present you can give your kids. Every kid is different. Nobody else is like your child. “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he or *she* is old, he will not depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6).

Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived, with the exception of the Lord Jesus, and he encouraged his son in Proverbs 3:21–26 saying, “My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion: So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken”

CHAPTER FOUR

HOW TO BECOME SUCH A PARENT

How can anyone become fit for this job? It is certain that no one can become fit for this job by his own merit, because,

“..... for by strength shall no man prevail.”

– 1Samuel 2:9b.

Eli the high priest's sons were not properly brought up even though Eli their father was on the right path. That will be discussed in another part. The point here is that you cannot make yourself fit for this job on your own, you need a supernatural being to make you fit for the job. For,

“..... not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”

– Zechariah 4:6.

We were all born into this Sodom-like tendency also known as sin. And without the removal of this Sodom-like tendency in you, you cannot be fit for the job. To remove this tendency, you have to admit your present condition without blaming anybody or society for it. Desire to be free from your present condition of Sodom-like tendency. If you have done that already, you are on the right track to become free from Sodom-like tendencies, though you are not yet free. To become free, our creator, or should I say our manufacturer, God, knows that humanity have strayed away from the manufacturer's intention. That is why he said;

“.... All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

– Romans 3:23.

And

“The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.”

– Psalm 58:3.

For this reason, He has made provisions for us to become free; this is what the car manufacturers call, “recall” to fix what is not according to the manufacturer’s intention. This provision is in Jesus and it called ‘SALVATION.’

Before you make a commitment to raising your children with Christian values, you must have to commit yourself first to Christ Jesus and be born again. Start your journey to the impossible with humble prayer. God does not give you a job and then expect you to figure it out on your own.

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

– James 1:5

The cycle of human life has persisted for ages. Children are born, they grow up, and the majority of them eventually have their own children. When one generation passes away, the next takes its place. The age-old inquiry, “What is the purpose of this repeated cycle of life?” has, however, only recently found an understanding. Those who are firmly rooted in the fallacious theory of evolution can only draw the conclusion that this cycle of human life exists exclusively to perpetuate the species. They hold the view that life is only an existence. It makes sense to those of us who have independently established the existence of the Creator God, that He created us with a purpose. That wonderful aim is revealed in the Bible very plainly:

“Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness”” (Genesis 1:26). People were made in the image of the Family of God (Ephesians 4:14–15). At Christ’s return, we can figuratively be fully born into the Family of God, in which Jesus Christ was “the firstborn among many brethren,” if we are open to receiving instruction from God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and willing to cultivate in ourselves the very character and mindset of God Himself (Romans 8:29).

As of right now, “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” (Romans 8:14, 16). What a fantastic opportunity! We can finally achieve God’s stated aim for us, which is to be fully created in His image, if we are willing to be guided and instructed by our spiritual Parent (God the Father) and our elder Brother who is also our Savior (Jesus Christ). “....., and hast redeemed us to God And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” (Revelation 5:9–10). King James Version. God’s intention is to raise godly offspring in His likeness who will serve Him as kings and priests alongside Jesus Christ on this planet.

The ultimate goal of Christian parents is to establish a foundation in their young, impressionable years so that their children would always yearn to fully seek God as their Father. Although parents cannot coerce their children into making the right choices, that is not the intention. Even our heavenly Father, God, does not compel us to choose the correct path. He won’t compel us, but He will guide and lead us. Making our children want to follow in the footsteps of parents who live according to God’s will and who follow their spiritual Father is the aim of godly parenting. Instead of only emphasizing our desire for our children to follow God, as parents, we should also encourage their desire to do so.

I was fortunate to have parents who were excellent role models for parenting. Even though they weren't Christians, they had good moral ethics, tendencies and beliefs that are in accord with God's word, and they were also disciplined. While not everyone has had the good fortune to go through a constant parental pattern, we all go through the pattern of our spiritual Father, who is completely consistent with us. God's word makes it very plain that He operates according to the "blessing for obedience and correction for disobedience" tenet. By regularly applying this principle to parenting, we build a solid foundation for God's future family.

Yes, setting a good example for others starts with us. Children must experience the true God via the eyes of their parents. The primary influence on how young children view God is their parents' behavior. If we as parents are not living, breathing examples of godliness, how can we expect to raise godly children? Children are unlikely to be drawn to their parents' beliefs if they witness intolerance, hypocrisy, self-centeredness, and frequently outbursts of wrath. Instead, the authority figures they encountered as children will subsequently cause them to have a bad attitude toward God's authority.

Parents must firmly establish via their own personal life experience that God's way of life is of the utmost worth and benefits them. How will we ever persuade our children that God's laws are worthwhile and that the godly principles we teach are good for them if we have not clearly shown them how God's principles work for us?

Despite how significant our example is, it only represents a portion of the whole. Even if we were all ideal parents, a perfect outcome would not necessarily result from our perfection. Although the Bible calls Adam "the son of God" (Luke 3:38), we also know that God did not coerce Adam and Eve into making the proper choice. Even though God was the perfect parent and had created Adam and Eve to follow His example, they chose to disregard His advice. Later, the son of God's child (Adam), Cain, was raised to commit murder.

Do we stand a chance of raising kids who will give their life to God? The “god of this age,” also known as the “prince of the power of the air, the spirit who is at work in the sons of disobedience,” rules over the world in which we live (2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2). The twisted worldview of Satan’s way of life is widely prevalent in the entertainment industry. The diabolical idea of evolution is ingrained in the education system of this society, and morality and values are also steadily being lost.

One of the most important parenting principles is that we must actively show our kids how God’s way works for us! We must be able to demonstrate to our kids through our own lives that following God’s rules will make life much more enjoyable than following Satan’s system. But love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are the characteristics of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23). If you ask people on the street if they’d like to live a life filled with love, pleasure, and peace, they’ll all respond with a resounding “Absolutely!” The issue is that the typical person in today’s society does not perceive God’s values as the cause of a very stable and joyful life. This is mostly due to the world being exposed to a false “so-called” Christianity rather than being called to actual Christianity. The truth of the Bible must be taught to our children as parents, not only in the doctrine we teach but also in the truth we practice. Growing up with respect and obedience to God will not be difficult for kids if they have parents who love them unconditionally, have clear-cut laws that are consistently repeated, and authentically exhibit the fruits of the Spirit.

The wicked falsehood that God’s way of life is a “genuine drag” is one that many people have bought into. They believe that God forbids us from enjoying anything, leading to a boring existence filled with misery and unnecessary self-denial (Colossians 2:18-23). If this is how we see God, then our children will notice and adopt this view of God as well. On the other hand, if parents truly appreciate the greatness of God and appreciate the great blessing of comprehending

His way of life, which outlines what is detrimental to us and what will result in an abundant life in every way emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually, our kids will internalize that.

Children of Christians are blessed in a special way. According to the Apostle Paul, a kid who has even one Christian parent who has converted is “holy” (1 Corinthians 7:14), which denotes that the child is special in God’s eyes and has been “set apart.” But will all of these believers’ offspring enthusiastically respond to God? Their biological parents can have a significant impact on how simple or difficult it is for them to respond. In like manner, their adopted parents can have a significant impact on how simple or difficult it is for them to respond as in the case of Queen Esther.

We must understand that being “called by God” merely signifies that one has been extended an invitation by God. Those who have been asked to attend a wedding may occasionally receive invites. The invitation is frequently accompanied by an R.S.V.P. that asks you to R.S.V.P. The host must be informed if you plan to attend in order to reserve a spot for you. Jesus Christ taught that the Kingdom of Heaven is like an invitation to a wedding: “The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to **call** those who were **invited** to the wedding; and they were not willing to come” (Matthew 22:2–3). As with any invitation, some individuals accept, and some do not even bother to respond. The English words “call” and “invite,” found in verse 3, are translated from the same Greek word. To be “called” by God and to be “invited” by God are one and the same.

When he said, “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call,” the Apostle Peter was referring to this invitation on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:39). We can see from this passage that God extends His gift of the Holy Spirit to individuals He will call in the future as well as to “you” who heard Peter speak on the day of Pentecost.

For all of them, seeking and experiencing sincere repentance and submission in water baptism is a requirement for obtaining the promise blessing of receiving God's Spirit (verse 38). While it is obvious that children of Christians may have access to God, not all of them will actively follow Him.

Therefore, it is our responsibility as parents to do everything in our power to guide our kids toward the Supreme God, who is their true Father. While we have the chance to create a foundation for their future throughout their early years, we want to mold them as best as we can. Even if not every child will choose to follow God completely, our instruction and preparation won't be in vain. Knowing God's laws will still be helpful to our kids in their lives, at least to the extent that they are obeyed. Even those whose parents are not Christians can attest to this. Because God's laws are based on the law of cause and effect, even non-Christians who follow them will eventually come to believe in them.

Those kids who were raised learning about God's way of life will at least have a base to fall back on if and when they so choose. Christian parents naturally wish and pray for their kids to convert to God right now. But even if they don't, we may at least be confident that every second we spend instructing them (Deuteronomy 6:4–7), every good deed we do, and every loving thought we have for our kids won't go to waste. Before the end of this age, they will have a solid basis to rely on, even if it be before the White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11–12).

What a wonderful future awaits those children who “see the light” in their childhood and truly turn to God their maker! As a loving physical father would, God offers to be their parent and their companion for life, guiding them through each choice and life milestone. Better relationships, more robust families, tranquil and stable minds, and birth into the very Family of God will be the outcomes when Christ returns. They will have the chance to assist Jesus Christ in establishing His Kingdom and bringing about world

peace. Without pollution, crime, or the blight of overcrowded inner-city slums, cities will be rebuilt according to God's plan. Our kids may get to experience the global transition of this new era firsthand at the second coming of Jesus Christ. That is, if they should miss the rapture of the saints, they might be able to endure the Great Tribulation to partake physically in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Or return with Christ in His Second Coming.

At the conclusion of this era, parents who are begotten "children of God" have a duty to assist in carrying out Christ's great commission. Their supplications and donations can assist God's Work in proclaiming the coming Kingdom of God "in all the globe as a witness" (Matthew 24:14). Additionally, we learn that there will be an effort to "convert the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their dads, lest I come and strike the world with a curse" prior to the Day of the Lord and the end of the age (Malachi 4:6). God the Father is the ultimate Father, to whom the children's hearts must be turned. As we've seen, God's mission on earth is to "create man in His image, after His likeness" (Genesis 1:26). In the spiritual and moral likeness of God, God is producing future members of His Family as His literal children.

Therefore, being parents is a highly noble calling. As His offspring made in His likeness, our God is shaping us! God is also calling us to mold our children's young, impressionable minds into His likeness. This is a challenging objective in a perilous environment. But because God has promised that "..... I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper" (Hebrews 13:5–6). We shall more closely imitate our Father's characteristics as the ideal parent in our own lives as we get closer to Him. Every single parent has erred in parenting, yet God is aware that both parents and their offspring are able to grow and change.

Yes, it is easier said than done, yet there is genuine hope with God's direction. Maintaining the guiding principle of raising kids "in God's image" will provide us access to all of the Creator God's resources. Our family's core focus and guiding principle will be to raise our children "in God's image" if that is our ultimate objective as parents. The development of a God-centered culture in our household therefore becomes our true goal. According to Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, one meaning of culture that is particularly relevant is "particular stage of growth in civilization." In this instance, it is the future Family of God's "advancement in civilization" as we move forward. Let us recommit our lives as parents and grandparents as for all begotten children of the great God to guiding the children's hearts toward their spiritual Father. The ultimate aim and purpose of parenting is to create children who reflect God.

I want to examine this verse more closely, and draw from it three important principles for the godly parents who desire to raise their children the right way.

Parents Should Raise Their Children for The Lord.

Take note of the phrase "of the Lord" that Paul uses to conclude his advice to parents (fathers). This saying serves as a reminder for us to raise our kids in a way that points them toward the Lord so that the Lord will guide them. In addition to wanting children to follow the Lord after their brief stay in our home, we also want them to develop a personal connection with Christ.

It's helpful to remember that although we are their God-appointed caregivers and teachers during their formative years, our children actually belong to the Lord and not to us. He created them and longs to protect them. It's as if God has given us the job of being the world's babysitters and replacement teachers for his children.

Since we are now God's children, we ought to treat them better than we were treated by Satan before we accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior. Be imitators of God as beloved children, as it says in Ephesians 5:1. And "Walk as children of light," says Ephesians 5:8. As parents and as God's children, we ought to treat our kids affectionately, just as God does with us.

We should try to raise our kids in a way that closely resembles how God would raise them. Because of this, it's crucial to attend a church that is Bible based and filled with the Holy Spirit, and to surrender to the Lord first and foremost as parents. The ultimate goal of parents submitting to the Lord is to be able to teach their children to do the same.

Where Should Parents Get Guidelines for Raising Children?

(i) Let the Bible be your guide.

We should draw our parenting strategies and insights from the Lord, or more precisely from his Word, as Christian parents who are raising our children in and for the Lord. There are many publications available today that explain how to be an All-Star parent, but the Bible, not these books, ought to serve as our manual.

It's crucial to steer clear of popular psychology (such as that found in Parenting Magazine, movies, and talk shows), cultural customs, sage advice from around the globe, personal intuition, and parenting practices passed down from your parents and grandparents. Now, some of the parenting advice we receive from various sources may be beneficial, but only if it accords with what the Lord says.

Abraham is a wonderful illustration of how to achieve this. Abraham “command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment,” according to Moses (Genesis 18:19).

Take into account how Isaac obediently served his father by bringing wood for a sacrifice on Mount Moriah and even by allowing his father to bind him on the altar (Genesis 22:6-9). He didn’t object, cry out, dispute with his dad, or flee.

Eli the high priest is in contrast to this. “His sons became themselves filthy,” as revealed to Samuel, “and he did not control [or reprimand] them” (1 Samuel 3:13). Eli did nothing to instruct or discourage them as they engaged in immorality and thievery inside the tabernacle.

(ii) Talk about Old Testament stories.

Have you noticed what I just did? I used Abraham and Eli as examples in some of the Old Testament tales I taught you to teach you about parenting.

The Bible offers a wealth of knowledge for warning and correcting your kids against improper, sinful behavior. Think about Paul’s claim that the Old Testament accounts of the Israelites’ mistakes in the wilderness are preserved in Scripture to deter us from making the same mistakes now (1 Corinthians 10:1-11).

Do you ever use stories and lessons from the Old Testament to discipline and teach your kids today? Sometimes I’ll tell my kids that when some Israelites whined in the wilderness, God would open up holes in the ground to devour them alive or they would get sick when they grumbled about their food.

When kids struggle to carry out their daily duties and tasks, I like to remind them of David, who as a child spent many days tending to his father's sheep. Although it was difficult and uncomfortable work, he was able to see God's greater purpose for his life, to become the king of Israel because he had learnt to obey his father.

(iii) Talk to your children about Jesus.

In the New Testament (NT), Paul talks about a mother and grandmother who taught their son or grandson, Timothy, from the Bible (the father was probably not saved or had passed away). They had been doing this since he was a little child, and in addition to teaching him moral teachings, they also introduced him to Jesus (2 Timothy 3:15).

He was "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" as a result of their work on him (2 Timothy 3:15). Paul further informs Timothy that the entire Bible "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). Don't simply tell your children what you think when you warn them or chastise them; also tell them what the Lord thinks and why they should obey the Lord.

We must stay away from the pitfall of only imparting moral and legal principles. By discussing who Jesus is, how he fully fulfills what the Bible teaches, and how they must put their faith in him as their Savior and God for salvation, we must teach children these things with Jesus in mind. Without his salvation, they will experience the greatest amount of frustration possible because they will never understand the purpose of life and will have to endure God's wrath for sin for all of eternity.

(iv) It's tough being a kid!

It is our responsibility as parents to help our children navigate their difficulties rather than make them worse. Will we be parents who understand their kids and do away with the things that make us frustrated and angry? Will we instruct our kids about Jesus and the Bible as we raise them in the Lord's service?

These are the results of a church that is Spirit-filled. And if your upbringing was characterized by frustrations and rage that your parents were unable to address, take this opportunity to express your complaints to God. He is our heavenly father, and his spiritual family is the church. To become a child of God, you must first put your trust in Christ and become His follower, after which you can regularly participate in the worship of God in the church and ministry. He will provide for those necessities in your life that your parents were unable to meet by his grace.

(v) Taking Up the Spade

How can you be sure that your little child, as adorable and cuddly as they may be now, will continue to bring you delight as they grow older? What sort of tree will you plant to provide shade in order to defend that treasured life from others who would try to take advantage of its weaknesses? Ephesians 6:4 states, "... provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." There is nothing else to say, and it is not challenging. It doesn't call for you to be a child psychologist, go to a thousand seminars, or buy every book there is on raising kids.

You would imagine that life was less confusing and challenging back when Paul was alive, making raising children easier. Hardly. In Roman culture, a newborn infant was laid at the feet of the father. The father knew the infant and wanted to keep it if he knelt down to lift it. If he turned and left, the kid would be thrown out. Unwanted infants were regularly dumped

in the dump or left in the forum, where they were gathered up by persons who would later use them as slaves and prostitutes. The only difference between their world and ours is that we have the medical technology to prevent children from being born.

While abandoning a kid to prevent them from developing physically, spiritually, socially, or psychologically as God would like is one of the most horrible abuses and one of the most unimaginable, are you really that different from the Roman father who tossed his undesirable child away when you don't spend time with your child and don't raise him or her in the discipline and instruction of the Lord?

Children are frequently left with a babysitter, daycare facility, or school so that their parents may get on with their lives. A recent Newsweek piece claims: "Schools frequently struggle to track down parents when issues emerge; one woman told a Chicago school that she had never given out her unlisted phone number. One-third of all elementary school pupils return to empty houses because so many parents are busy at work. Some kindergarteners can only communicate with other kids by beating them, having never been read to or even spoken to (Where Are the Parents?)."

It may have caught your attention that Paul seems to have limited his command to dads (Ephesians 6:4). Although Scripture occasionally uses that phrase to refer to parents, it was traditionally only used to refer to the male head of the household (Hebrews. 11:23). It combines the mother's cooperation and the father's leadership. In order for children to flourish mentally, physically, socially, and spiritually, both the mother and father must be involved. Jesus cited two historical occurrences when He forewarned us about potential end-of-the-world scenarios. He started with the days of Noah and then went on to the days of Lot. The Bible informs us that the time of Noah marked the height of human depravity. Every "imagination of the heart" was evil, according to Genesis 6. As a result, every thought they had was connected in some way to doing something bad.

Although I don't think we've arrived yet, we are moving in that direction.

Because it is prominent in the first few lines of that chapter, as well as a great deal of violence, we saw in the previous lecture that there was some form of perversion of marriage. God expressed his anger at having created man and resolved to wipe away everyone save for Noah and his family because it was so violent. The sermon then spent the majority of its time on Lot's period. My primary objective in going through all of that was to provide a description of life in Sodom. Quite a bit is known about Noah's era. Given that Sodom is synonymous with that particular sort of homosexuality, we believe we understand what it was like there. Therefore, we believe that is how Sodom was.

But I wanted to demonstrate how much additional knowledge the entire Bible offers about what Sodom was actually like through its descriptions. We learned that the infamous Sodomites, who lived in Sodom, were homosexuals who engaged in extremely aggressive behavior. However, we have seen that Sodom was far more than that in other areas. For instance, they were very well off. Money was literally pouring out of their ears. They were practically in a paradise.

The Bible compares the plain of Jordan, where Sodom and Gomorrah and the other three towns were, to God's Garden. Heaven was there. A seed you dropped on the ground may grow up overnight, resembling Jack and the Beanstalk.

The environment was ideal, the soil was fertile, there was water, and it was just a fantastic place to live. It was the breadbasket of the area. They undoubtedly produced a lot more food than they could eat, which allowed them to export it.

Jesus offers some support for this. He notes how difficult their labor was when He speaks about it. When He spoke of Lot's time, He said they were building, sowing, and engaging in all these other activities that demonstrate that they were a society of merchants, growers, and builders. They were earning a lot of money through their

trades and trading because they were also on a confluence of trade routes, and they were able to take their finished goods and sell them to the caravannings.

The more interesting similarities regarding what Sodom was like come from Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who compared them to Judah and Israel. They assert that the Sodomites had a disproportionately high level of free time. The report claimed that they exhibited an “abundance of laziness.” They were able to live luxuriously and leave work early to do whatever they pleased because they had made so much money. And it regularly leads people astray.

And then there was the excess of food. They had a ton. They had no compelling motive to go to work or engage in activities that are more beneficial to their spiritual or cultural well-being than their financial well-being. They consequently got entangled in all kinds of wrongdoing. They also claim that the inhabitants of Sodom were arrogant and indulgent. For starters, I’m sure they were proud of their culture and their capacity for generating income. Of course, they were also luxurious.

They were alleged to lack compassion. Because they were investing all of their earnings, cash, and spare time on themselves rather than helping the underprivileged, they refused to help the poor. It further claims that the inhabitants of Sodom supported evildoers, saying, “Aha, now is my chance to succeed,” when a wicked person showed up. As a result, people would back that bad leader who would get to the top of society rather than acting morally. That concludes our initial examination of Sodom, Gomorrah, and the plain cities. They lived in a paradise, were very wealthy, and had no trouble making money. They (merchants, farmers, and builders) worked hard, but they also had too much spare time, were arrogant, indulgent, heartless, and encouraged bad behavior. The people of Sodom are indeed extensively described in the Bible.

Jesus underlines that both the people in Noah's day and the people in Sodom were so self-absorbed that neither knew their civilizations were going to be judged and destroyed when you read Matthew 24, and Luke 17 (where Jesus discusses the days of Noah and Lot). Only the tip of their own noses were visible to them. They were blinded from the view of their surroundings. They were impervious to the decline of their society.

They did not consider it to be particularly horrible, even if they had seen or had a glimpse of it. They recognized a window of opportunity to seize, then they did, but only to further their own interests. He uses this as an illustration and a lesson for us because He likens it to the fact that we are also unsure of the exact time the Son of Man will make his appearance. Even those of us who have the knowledge imparted to us by the Holy Spirit are unaware of the precise date of Christ's return. You won't be aware of the day or the time, he says. He was totally uninformed.

His Heavenly Father alone. We won't know, but we might have a rough idea or be able to come close. He continues by saying that, if it were possible, even the elect could be deceived. Therefore, we can be looking in one direction or the other and overlook crucial cues. Hopefully, that won't be the case.

We should pray constantly to avoid being misled and to see things clearly from His perspective. He warns us to keep an eye on things since we won't know when He will return. He suggests that we should be aware of what is going on around us, if not cautious. We must constantly compare society and our own lives to the ideal, in order to gauge how far we have fallen short of it and see the signals of the times.

Therefore, it is important to regularly assess how godly or ungodly society is; I think we are on the ungodly side. People are getting more and more immoral. They have lost some of their former "Christian" zeal. Whether or not they truly comprehended what the Bible said, many people used to follow its instructions. Although they

had their own techniques, at least they were moral individuals. They would do their best to uphold the Ten Commandments.

But in today's world, those things are fading away, and we must be mindful that fewer and fewer people take the Bible and Christianity seriously. But more significant than gauging the state of society, we need to regularly measure our own spiritual health.

On the path to raising children, first seek wisdom from the Author. Ask God for wisdom often and always. Conventional wisdom tells us that women and mothers ought to take care of themselves first. Godly wisdom says that we put our relationship with Jesus first.

Make an intentional decision to grow in your own spiritual life. If you exercise once a month, don't expect to become physically fit. If you have a healthy meal once a week, you can't be adequately nourished. Your own spiritual growth has far more eternal and practical consequences than either of those physical disciplines. There are many methods to develop your spirituality, but the most effective one for both your own development and setting a good example for your children is to set aside regular time each day to read the Bible and pray.

You need not have all the answers, as crucial as it is to know what you believe, I want you to understand that. Infants are brought to us so that we can grow with them. Don't invent answers when the questions become more challenging. "Let's see what the Bible says about that," you should say to your preteens and teenagers, the source, please. There has never been a moment when it has been easier to get scriptural solutions. Utilize technology, but instead of reading someone else's interpretation of the Bible, find what the Bible says about the difficult subjects. One of the most crucial lessons we can impart to our kids is that God is big enough to handle all of our questions and that there are no quick fixes. Let your kids know that it's ok to struggle to find the solutions to challenging issues.

It is this last aspect which is the focus here.

Pray for Our Children's Salvation

After committing them to our care, we still have a duty to pray for them. It continues all the way up to and after the child gives his or her own life to the Lord (Job 1:1-5). It should become a daily ritual for us to pray for our kids and their needs, inviting them to join us in our prayers. You ought to ask God to convert your kids for the following reasons:

- (i) The price of their redemption is so significant that it is worth any suffering you may endure in order to obtain it for them via prayer.**

Because of how priceless their souls are, how terrible it would be for them to lose them; how much they would benefit from eternal life, and because you might be able to save them by your prayers, you should be moved to make continual pleas on their behalf.

- (ii) Few will pray for them if you do not.**

Even though we are commanded to pray for everyone (1 Timothy 2:1), few people actually do so. When it is finished, individuals who are prayed for are frequently those who are valued highly by the Church or the wider community.

- (iii) No one else can pray for them as you do.**

Your ability to make an urgent and earnest request of God on their behalf with a sincerity that can withstand no denial is based on your sincere love and affection for your children as well as your understanding of their characteristics, needs, and challenges. God uses his paternal love as the foundation for his case when he seeks to persuade us that he is willing to answer our prayers

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

(Luke 11:13).

(iv) Your refusal to do so will be perilous to them and to you.

God takes note of our efforts to carry out our parenting responsibilities. He does not make his incredibly grand and priceless promises to disobedient, prayerless parents.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them."

(Psalm 103:17-18)

Your kids are fallen beings and are besieged by demonic forces. They need God's protection, and they need the Holy Spirit to constrain, enlighten, control, purify, and guide them from the inside out.

(v) You will then find it easier to perform other parental duties on the performance of which God has conditioned their salvation.

God commended Abraham for being one who would fulfil his parental duties (Genesis 18:18-19):

"Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."

God's will for you as a parent is clear:

"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."

(Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

It is a great work, and nothing can sustain you under the burden like praying for your children, believingly, earnestly and perseveringly in giving attention to instruction and discipline, do not neglect prayer! Some blessings seldom come except in answer to heartfelt prayer. One of these is the early conversion of our children.

- (vi) **Prayer alone can call into exercise that divine power in their behalf, which is absolutely necessary in order that the prayers which you may employ for their salvation may not be used in vain.**

Only God's mighty power can effect the great change necessary, in raising them to life from a state of spiritual death. Your child is absolutely dependent upon the influences of God's all-powerful Spirit. Though you persevere in the use of means, without the Spirit it will be in vain. Nothing but believing prayer can secure his power to effect the change.

- (vii) **By their salvation, granted in answer to your prayers, your Savior will be glorified**

Not merely the salvation of your children, but the glory of your dear Savior in their salvation, should impel you to pray for them. This motive should be stronger than any other which can influence you to seek their salvation.

- (viii) **You have a strong encouragement and incentive to do so in the explicit promise of God that, if you are faithful to your trust, he will be their God.**

The words which God spoke to Abraham, when he entered into covenant with him and his seed, may be regarded as addressed to every believer individually, and therefore to you (compare Genesis 17:7; also, Isaiah 59:21, Acts 2:38). God's promises to you take into account your responsibility as a parent. Because God loves His own people with a love which passes knowledge, they cannot earnestly plead for such a thing as the salvation of their children without having power with Him. In addition to this, His love for them causes Him to have tenderness for their children. They also are beloved by Him and are dear to Him for their parents' sake.

Praying for Your Children's Welfare

Do not consider only your children's salvation but pray also for your children's welfare because:

- (i) **You may then expect, as a result of your prayers, that the power of God will counteract in some measure the evil you have done them.**

Even the best of parents sometimes do their children harm. This may be as a result of undue severity in discipline, partiality or injustice, but equally by misguided tenderness and lack of conscientious in exercising authority. Unceasing prayer will enable you to avoid these sins. Thoughtful love for them, and an earnest desire for their real good, would replace mere fondness, and you would be led to avoid the extremes of harshness and hurtful indulgence.

- (ii) **There will be critical periods in their lives when without your incessant prayers, offered with reference to such times, they may be left to act most unwisely if not disastrously.**

Pray for them in the momentous decisions concerning matters such as their future career and possible marriage. Do not put off praying over these because they might be in the distant future. Consider that you may not be alive when they face these decisions.

- (iii) **It will lead you to a better understanding of them.**

Fervent prayer, continuously offered for them, in which their special wants, as far as you know them, are spread before God, will be sure to lead to a greater watchfulness over them. It will lead to a closer study of their character and to a more exact understanding of their traits and wants. You should know what motives most easily influence them and what temptations are most likely to lead them into wrongdoing. You should also be familiar with their sorrows and circumstances, knowing intimately each one's character. If you are praying for them, you will be compelled to note these things.

- (iv) **It will increase your holy desires for them.**

If we cannot pray, even for strangers, without learning to love them, surely the more we commend our children to God, the stronger will our love for their souls become. This steady increase of holy desires in your heart, with reference to your children, will prove an unspeakable blessing both to them and to you.

- (v) **No other means will be so effectual in enabling you to overcome the difficulty you experience in talking with them on religious subjects.**

Out of the abundance of your heart your mouth will speak. We are often too reserved when it comes to speaking of spiritual matters with our children, despite the scriptural command (Deuteronomy 6:7). Nothing is so suited to remove this as earnest, persistent prayer, in which your child's needs are spread before God and specific requests are offered on its behalf.

- (vi) **You will thereby secure for them God's aid in the efforts they may make to yield their obedience which God requires of children's submission to their parent's will and implicit obedience. Children need more than mere human assistance, even though that assistance may come from wise and affectionate parents. They can no more perform their duties as children without such help from God, than you, without such help, can perform your parental duties. You are solemnly bound to think of the dependence of your children on God's help, and to earnestly pray that that help may be given to them in their endeavors to honor and obey you.**

- (vii) **Other parents seeing your example, may be led to imitate you.**

Others may be challenged by your diligence and may be inspired to be more zealous in their parental duties.

- (viii) **They will often, should they continue in the world, have their times of need when the power of God alone can avail to help them.**

Disappointments, sickness, losses, cares, in short, adversity in various forms will be sure to overtake them sooner or later, and it will be well for them if you have anticipated these times of need by much prayer offered on their behalf. There will be times of temptation when they will be in fearful danger. The evil one will seek to lay snares for them and at such times earthly friends

will be of no help. Ask the Savior to defend them from the spite, power and wiles of evil spirits, the agents of Satan, who are constantly around them. In closing, never approach the throne of grace with your own wants without remembering your children's, who are no less helpless and needy than you. Let us resolve that we will give ourselves more intently to the work of interceding for our children. Whether we pray for our offspring or not must decide what our distant decedents are to be, and what kind of influence they will exert. Surely our fervent prayers for God's blessing on our children would be offered without ceasing were we able to fully comprehend the far-reaching results of such prayers.

Teach Them the Ways of The Lord

Ephesians 6:4 and Proverbs 22:6 teach us that we need to bring our children up in the way of the Lord. Apart from the obvious forms of instruction, which involves bringing our children to Children's or Youth Ministry, personal day-to-day instruction is needed to help our children understand how to view moral and ethical decisions from God's perspective. If we instruct our children in God's way while they are young, these lessons will develop godly character in them.

Family Bible Study

Family Bible studies are perfect occasions to teach our children about God's Way. Notice: "Train up a child in the way that he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Make this a regular part of your family life. Set aside time on a consistent basis for the family to sit down together and learn from God's Word.

Make lessons fun and exciting to maintain your children's interest. Relate biblical examples to their everyday lives. However, do not fictionalize biblical characters just to hold their attention. Tell them exactly what the Bible says. Give them a realistic, mature and serious view of God's Word.

Use the Bible itself and the resources provided by the Church, such as the Children's Bible Lessons and The Story of the Bible series. Most other sources are unscriptural and put false ideas into our children's minds. These "helps" do not teach the true purpose of life and are generally focused only on entertaining.

In the course of teaching your children about the Bible, always emphasize an overarching, foundational principle: obedience to God produces blessings and happiness; disobedience and rebellion bring punishment and unhappiness.

Our God is both loving and caring. He left clear instructions on how we are to diligently and frequently teach our children His commandments (Deuteronomy 6:7). It is our responsibility to carry out this command!

Starting Point

Remember, before you begin teaching your children, you must be a living example of God's way of life. Just as ancient Israel was to be an example to the world that God's Way is the only one that works, we should set that same example for our children.

When it comes to teaching your child God's Way, remember to keep it simple. There are two ways of life: the GIVE way leads to happiness, peace and joy. The GET way leads to suffering, pain and strife.

Our families are a small example of God's great and awesome plan for all of mankind. The more effective we are at properly training them, the better we will maximize their opportunity to one day be called into His Church.

Be A Living Example of Christ To Them

The number one witness to our children is the godly example set by our own lives. Therefore, we must continually examine ourselves and our witness to our children. Proverbs 20:7 says, “The righteous or just walketh in his integrity: his children are blessed after him.” The main reason for the blessed state of this man’s children is that they have someone to look up to and use as an example from which to model their own behavior. So, we must strive to be that example to our own children, even as Christ is our example.

We believe the best way to assure that you are that witness is through a disciplined life of studying the Bible, prayer, fellowship, and serving. As you do this your life will reflect the very character of God more and more each day and your children will witness that reflection.

Discipline Them in The Same Manner the Lord Disciplines Us

“Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for crying,” says Proverbs 19:18. One day, it will be too late: your child will be too old for the rod to be effective. Do you realize that if you don’t discipline your children, you actually want them to die? Why? Anything can happen when children are left to their own devices. Your son could become a drug addict and die as a result of an overdose. Perhaps your daughter will become an alcoholic and crash her car into a tree, killing herself. Your son could become a homosexual and die from AIDS. Alternatively, any of them could grow up to be a criminal and end up being shot by police in an alley. While there is still hope, discipline your children. Death is the only option.

Proverbs 23:13-14 provides this encouragement: “*Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, And shall deliver his soul from hell.*” When you use the rod to discipline your children, you do more than save their lives, you save their souls.

Proverbs 29:17 says,

“Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.”

They will delight your soul if you discipline them and teach them to be obedient. It’s not that difficult. Set the standards, live by them, and expect your children to do the same, and they will love, support, and bless you in your old age.

The book of Proverbs (i.e., 13:24, 19:18, 22:15, 29:15, 17) teaches many practical aspects concerning the discipline we are to provide for our children. For example, it reveals that by chastening or disciplining our children, we are showing our love for them. However, this brings us to the motivation for discipline. Any discipline we give to our children should be done for their profit and not as a release for our own anger and/or frustration. The key is to discipline our children in the same way the Lord disciplines us. (Hebrews 12:5-11) God never strikes at His children in anger, and we shouldn’t either. Instead, we should explain to them why we are disciplining them, we carry out that discipline, and then most importantly we show our love for them just as God has shown us His love.

Anyway, this is the instrument, the tool, the equipment that my parents, especially my mother, found very useful when I was under their care—the lash. I also find it very useful in my family, though I seldom use it. If I should travel with my kids – now, of course if I should travel with my wife, I wouldn’t bring it. But if I should travel with my wife and my kids, we would put one in our luggage. Now this is very cheap, but it’s very useful. In fact, my mother used it to straighten me up.

Of course, I don’t enjoy disciplining my kids, but it brings us joy, knowing that when this is used properly, it brings growth and discipline to my children. Now we need this because even though my kids look like angels, they are still kids, for the Holy Scriptures says in Proverbs chapter twenty-two verse fifteen; “Foolishness is bound in

the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.” Give them the right environment and provocation and you will see the naughtiness and rebellious man in them. It helps to bring a permanent correction in any corrected aspect of their lives. And the Bible tells us in Proverbs that it is the rod that drives rebellion from the heart of a child. So, I think it’s very important. I’m sure all of you as parents will agree that we may be able to discipline our children. In fact, I think it is unloving not to discipline your children, or in fact, even irresponsible not to discipline your children, and it is the same for God to us.

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

(Hebrews 12:6 KJV).

That’s why the Bible says, ‘whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.’ God disciplines, and God chastises. Now the word chasteneth and scourgeth may appear old fashioned and not easy to understand. If you have been in the Gospel Light for many years, you will know that we read the King James Version, which puts it across more strongly. The King James uses the word – so not many of you are from Gospel light 20 years ago, is it? And actually, I used the King James Version of the Bible throughout this book. I think the word that King James uses—the word ‘scourgeth’—is accurate because in Greek, it literally means to flog with a whip - to scourge.

In other words, God inflicts pain on His children, and not just any pain, but great pain, because that’s what the whip, the scourge, is a picture of. So, now we’re going to look at a very painful subject - divine discipline. But I want to say to you, this is not a message to discourage you nor to crush you. This message from Hebrews is a message to encourage you and I hope at the end of this sermon like book, strangely but truly, you will have a sense of uplifting, blessing and encouragement from the Scripture itself.

So, let's look at divine discipline: how our heavenly Father disciplines all of us as children. So as a sermon illustration, I'll hold this cane for the rest of the message and if I see anyone fall asleep – oh no, I'm kidding, I can't do that to you. Alright, let's look at divine discipline.

The first thing I want to share with you is to tackle the question 'Why?' because that's really what most people will ask. We ask the question 'Why do bad things happen to good people, why would a good God inflict pain or great pain upon His people?' So, let's look at the reason for divine discipline.

The reason most of us would think of when God inflicts pain on us, is because we have been naughty and He doesn't like us. We would like to think that God is now angry with us and that God now hates us. So, He does a cruel thing to our lives. He disciplines us, He punishes us, and that's how we think: God is angry with me, God doesn't like me, God hates me and therefore I am being punished.

But that's what we think. But what does the Bible say? Does it say the Lord chasteneth the one He hates? No. *"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."* (Hebrews 12:6 KJV).

The Bible says the Lord disciplines the one He loves and chastises every son whom He receive. The word receives means He acknowledges. He receives; He chastises every son whom he acknowledges as His own. So, the Bible tells us the opposite is true; God does not give us pain because He hates us as His children, but because He loves us.

Wow! Even this pain that God gives is because He loves me? *"If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"* (Hebrews 12:7-8 KJV).

Yes, just in case it's not clear, let's look at verse seven: "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" Now the word chasteneth does not mean to punish, or in our modern-day vernacular in Nigeria, Singapore and some other part of the world, take it to be (punish or

to treat harshly). God is not here to punish us; nor is He here to pour out His vindictive wrath on us. The word chasteneth simply means to train as a child, or child training. He's training us, He's teaching us, He's correcting us. Why? Because He treats us as His sons and he does this because He loves us. I do that to my children too. I do say to them daddy loves you, but you keep repeating what I told you not to do, this flogging is to help you remember not to do them again. "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." (Hebrews 12:7-8 KJV).

He goes on to say: if you are left without chastisement, without teaching, without correction in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children, you don't belong to Him. Now I discipline my kids, but if I see naughty kids in a shopping mall or in a hawking center, I don't discipline them because they're not my kids! I don't love them the same way I love my kids. How do you know my kids are mine? Because I discipline them. It shows my love for them! So, it's a very simple reasoning here. The author who by the way is the Holy Spirit, who uses the human instrument to pen it down, is saying God gives us pain because He treats us as children; He treats us as children because He loves us.

Think of how you will feel to one day see your children as adults applying the godly principles you taught them—and reaping the awesome blessings that come from them. Imagine the discussions you might have about the times you spent together, learning, living and teaching God's way of life.

To do your part in making this a reality, teach your children God's Way!

CHAPTER FIVE

PARENTS' STEPS TO SUCCESS ONE

Your child begins to use recognizable words and short sentences when they are a toddler. Your youngster will at first use simple words like “bird,” “stick,” “moon,” or “teddy” to describe objects they can see. They might also use words like “carry me,” “bottle,” “banana,” “bread,” or “milk” to request something from you.

As your child gets older, they begin to use words to describe past actions or make predictions about the future. Additionally, your child will begin to comprehend parts of your phrases and comply with straightforward instructions like “Bring me your book” or “Wave bye-bye.” teaching young children to speak and talk.

Toddlers don’t need to be “taught” to talk. Through regular conversations with people, particularly with you, they learn.

It’s crucial to pay attention to your child’s interests when you’re with him or her. Then you can comment or offer a question and give your youngster time to react. You may say, “Look at the little green beetle,” for instance, if your youngster points to a beetle in the garden. “I’m curious what it is doing.” Then watch your youngster to see how they react.

Giving your child time to formulate their thoughts into words is crucial when you discuss experiences like this with them. Instead of speaking the words for your child, you should wait to hear what they have to say.

It’s crucial to demonstrate that you’re paying attention when your child reacts.

Making lots of eye contact and using phrases like, “You believe the beetle is going for a walk?” will help. Yes, that’s how it goes. By doing this, you convey to your child that you value what they have to

say. Additionally, you might convey this message by relating subsequent discussions to your child's experience. For instance, you might comment, "There's a small bug," after spotting a picture of one in the book. "It's similar to the one we saw today."

Simple and meaningful interactions like these encourage your child to talk more and use more words. They help your child learn about the pattern of conversations and encourage your child to use words to understand their world.

Helping Toddlers Turn Wants, Needs and Emotions into Words

In the toddler years, children don't always have words to express their wants, needs and emotions. They often use **body language** or other kinds of nonverbal communication, like crying, instead.

For example, your child might:

- ☼ tug on your pants to be picked up
- ☼ shake or nod their head
- ☼ reach for something they want
- ☼ jump up and down if they're excited
- ☼ cry if a toy breaks or they hurt themselves.

These are great times to **encourage your child to use words**. You can do this by repeating back what you think your child wants or needs. For example, 'You look hungry. Do you want more apples? Yes or no?'

You can also help your child understand how **words go together with needs, wants and emotions** by talking about them and making connections. For example, 'Thanks for showing me the paint is knocked over. I can see you're really sad that your picture got messed up'. This links the emotion with the word 'sad'.

Tips to Get Toddlers Talking

Here are some everyday ideas to get your child talking and help them learn more words:

- ☀ Read together and share stories. Stories that have word patterns, rhymes and colorful pictures often capture a toddler's interest and attention.
- ☀ Sing songs or say rhymes with your child. This helps your child understand different word sounds – and it's fun. If you need help remembering the words of songs and rhymes, you can purchase kid karaoke to help out.
- ☀ When you play with your toddler, use words to describe what's happening – for example, 'Push the ball back to Mummy' and 'You got the ball!'
- ☀ Give your child choices using words and objects. For example, you could hold up 2 pairs of shoes and say, 'We're going outside. Do you want to wear your red boots or your blue shoes?'
- ☀ When your child uses 'made-up' verbs like 'goed', repeat the sentence back with the correct word. For example, 'Yes, the man went out the door'.
- ☀ When your toddler uses simple word combinations like 'Dog go away, daddy come here', repeat the words back to your child in full sentences. For example, 'You want Daddy to make the dog go away?'

Tips to Help Toddlers Understand Words

During the toddler years, your child understands more and more of what you say to them. But they don't understand everything. Here are some ideas to try when your child seems puzzled by something you've said:

- ☀ Try saying it in different ways. For example, 'Put the blocks in the box', or 'Here's the box. Put the blocks in it', or 'Take the blocks to the box, and put them in'.
- ☀ Try to use the same words to describe things. If you repeat the same words, your child will start to understand them. For example, you

might always use the word ‘pyjamas’ when you talk about what your toddler wears to bed.

- ☼ When you need to give instructions or requests, make them clear and use only 1-2 steps – for example, ‘Lids on the markers. Then put the markers in the tub’.

Moral Value

Treat Your Children With Care

If you ever watched a toddler fall 600 times in a single day, bouncing their heads off of furniture and the floor, then you know that kids can be remarkably tough and resilient.

While kids are physically tough, they are emotionally fragile. That is why God through Paul begins his instructions to Christian parents with a negative command. He says in Ephesians chapter six verse four, “...provoke not your children to wrath.”

That phrase “provoke not” can be translated a number of different ways. It means not to irritate, or not to agitate to the point of causing resentment. Some have translated this phrase as, “Don’t exasperate your children.”

The idea here is of not treating your children in such a way that you bring them to a point of frustration, anger, despair, and resentment. In other words, a godly parent will be careful in how they treat their children.

Notice a couple of things about the treatment Paul prohibits in this verse. First of all, think about:

A. The Cause of An Angry Child

In verse 4, Paul does not say exactly how a child can become exasperated and angry, but I think there are some clear causes that we can identify. There are probably many, but just think about these few.

First of all, a critical parent can cause a child to become angry. There is a difference in verbal correction and hurtful criticism. The parent who constantly harps on a child's flaws and failures, always pointing out what is wrong with a child, is creating a child that will be full of resentment.

Also, a confusing parent can create an angry child. What I mean is the parent that is inconsistent. A parent who demands one thing from a child, but does another themselves, or the parent who allows one thing today, but demands something else the next day, is a confusing parent.

Further, a controlling parent can raise a resentful child. Kids should not be out of control, but they should not be over-controlled either. The parent that tries to dominate and dictate every aspect of a child's life is creating a rebellious and angry child. On this point, "We can guide their wills, but we cannot control their wills."

Also, a cold parent will produce a frustrated and angry child. The mom or dad that is detached and distant from their child, who shows little concern or interest, and refuses affection and affirmation, is a cold parent.

Finally, among many others, a complacent parent will raise an angry child. The complacent parent is the one who is too busy with other things, or simply too lazy to give their children what they need. The child of a complacent parent will grow up with resentment and frustration.

The godly parent must be careful, because the life of a child is an impressionable and fragile thing. Our impact upon them is enormous, and can be dangerous if we don't treat them with care.

Think with me not only about the cause of an angry child, but also:

B. The Cost of An Angry Child

Look again at Ephesians chapter six verse four Paul says, “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath...” Why would the apostle begin his instructions to parents with this negative command?

The answer is because he knew that once a child had reached the point of exasperation and frustration, the parent would no longer be able to effectively teach and lead them. The parent who raises an angry child cannot expect to raise a godly one at the same time.

You can bring your children to church, and you can tell them that they need to love the Lord Jesus and serve Him, but if you are frustrating them and angering them by your lousy and careless parenting, don’t expect them to listen to your spiritual guidance.

If you are not careful on how you treat your children, you will lose the power of influence over them, and while they may grow up in your house, you will not have raised them.

A police officer saw a little fellow walking down the side of the road with a backpack. The officer pulled over and asked him, “Where are you headed, son?” The little boy answered, “I’m running away from home.” The officer said, “Why are you doing that?” The boy replied, “Because mom and dad won’t mind me anymore.”

Some kids run away, but others have been pushed away. The parent that is not careful will drive their children to anger, rather than developing them into adulthood.

Notice a second principle we draw from this verse. If you are going to raise your children right, not only must you treat your children with care, but notice also that you must:

Train Your Children Through Commitment

One of the most famous verses in the Bible, dealing with the subject of parenting, is Proverbs 22:6. It says, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

In Ephesians 6:4, Paul echoes part of that verse when he says that rather than provoking your children to wrath, you should, “...bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

Notice that phrase “bring them up”. It is translated from one Greek word, and it means to bring up to maturity. The idea is of caring for someone until they have grown up into adulthood.

Understanding this, we are reminded that parenting is not a part-time job. It is a process that requires commitment. As someone has noted, “You spend the first two years of your child’s life teaching them to walk and talk. You spend the next 18 years telling them to sit down and be quiet.”

In all seriousness, the Bible tells us that parents who want to build and train good kids must be seriously committed in a couple of specific areas. First of all, a godly parent must be committed to training their children:

A. By Consistently Disciplining Them

Look again at Ephesians chapter six verse four. We are told to bring up our children “...in the nurture...of the Lord.” That word nurture is translated from a word that speaks of the entire process of training or rearing a child.

The same Greek word is found in Hebrews chapter 12, and it is translated as “chastening.” In verse 4, the word “nurture” is talking about the work of disciplining your children.

I believe that in spite of the changing attitudes of our day, every loving, godly parent will have and use a purpose-driven discipline. Discipline, including that of spanking, is clearly laid out in the Word of God.

Proverbs 13:24 says, “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him [diligently].” Consistent, firm, and loving discipline is a commitment that every Christian parent must make.

Do you realize that when you discipline your child, you model theological truth for them? Hebrews 12:6 says, “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”

By consistently disciplining your child, you teach them that sin has consequences, and that God loves them too much to let them continue in their sins.

Likewise, the parent who does not discipline their children, or who is inconsistent in their discipline, teaches their children that God’s Word is not true and that committing sin has little or no consequence.

Christian parents must train their children not only by consistently disciplining them, but also:

B. By Carefully Directing Them

Look again at Ephesian chapter six verse four, and notice the other word that Paul uses. He says, “...bring them up in the...admonition of the Lord.” Mark that word “admonition”. It is translated from a word that literally means “putting in mind”.

The idea of “admonition” is verbal instruction and direction. It is the education that a parent gives to their children.

I thank God for those who work as teachers and educators in our schools. They fill an important role in our society, and they are not appreciated as they should be.

However, the person who does the most to direct your child and to shape their thinking should not be their history teacher nor their guidance counselor. Instead, it should be you – their parents.

Godly parents cannot afford to delegate the education of their children to an employee of the state. If you are going to raise your children right, then how they think and how they view their world must be taught to them by you – not a government mandated curriculum.

In many ways, parents are teachers who don't get the summer off. You are supposed to be the primary educator and instructor for your child. You are to admonish them, and direct them as they mature and grow into adulthood.

When baseball legend Harmon Killebrew was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in the class of 1984, he talked about how his father had taught him and his brother how to play baseball in the front yard of their home. He said, "One day my mother came out and told him we were ruining the lawn. My father told her, 'We're raising kids, not grass'."

We need more parents who understand the priority of raising and training their kids. It is a commitment that must come above everything else. It is the commitment to consistently discipline and carefully direct the life of the children with which God has entrusted them.

There is a final principle that I want to draw from this verse. If you are going to raise your children right, notice that you must not only treat your children with care and train your children through commitment, but notice also thirdly that godly parents must:

Teach Your Children About Christ

Notice the last three words of verse 4, "...of the Lord." All of Paul's instructions to parents are capped off by this statement. The efforts of a Christian parent are all aimed at producing a child who knows and loves the Lord.

Raising your kids right means teaching them what is right. That means that you must teach your kids about Jesus. As a parent, the Bible calls upon you to be an evangelist in your home, and witness to your kids.

It is sad when a parent is more concerned about their kids going to college than they are about them going to heaven. It is a tragedy when a father will teach his son how to catch a football and run down the field, but he will not teach him how to carry his Bible and walk with Jesus.

If we are going to do our homework, we must begin by teaching our own children about Christ. I want to say a couple of things about this priority of being a witness to your children. First of all:

A. Don't Neglect This Opportunity

I am afraid that too many parents spend little or no time talking to their kids about the things of God. Dr. James Dobson once observed that, "We spend so much time trying to give our kids the things we did not have, that we have forgotten to give them that we did have."

Unreservedly, I would say to any parent, regardless of what you give your children, if you do not teach them about Christ, you have failed them as a parent. You must not neglect the opportunity you have to teach your kids about Jesus.

Some parents neglect this opportunity by outsourcing it. What I mean is that they think it is the church's job to teach their children about Christ. Therefore, they feel that as long as they take their kids to church, their kids will come to know Jesus.

While the church should help you in teaching your kids about Jesus, it cannot replace you! A Sunday school teacher, or a youth pastor will never be able to replace a godly mom and dad that personally witness to their kids.

Other parents neglect this opportunity by replacing it. That is, they feel that as long as they involve their kids in good activities, and keep them busy with innocent activities, that will somehow save them from sin and hell.

Understand; your child doesn't have to go wild to go to hell. Just because they make all-stars and honor-roll doesn't mean they will make it to heaven. You can raise a valedictorian, who goes to Harvard, but ends up a pagan that dies and goes to hell.

You ought to encourage your children to achieve and succeed, but don't be fooled into thinking that a successful child is a saved one. Don't neglect the unique opportunity that you have to lead your children to Christ!

Notice something else about the priority of teaching your children about Christ. Don't neglect this opportunity, and also, I would say to you:

B. Don't Negate This Opportunity

It is one thing for a parent to witness to their children about Jesus. It is another thing for that parent to walk with Jesus in front of those children.

Some parents carry their kids to church, and preach to them about their need of Christ, but then they negate all of that by the hypocritical way in which they live their lives.

Don't tell your kids that God loves them unconditionally, and then shun them when they disappoint you. Don't expect your kids to read the Bible if you never open yours.

Don't look for your kids to appreciate the church if you hardly attend it. Don't expect your kids to understand the sacrificial death of Jesus if you won't even sacrifice your favorite TV shows in order to spend time talking to them.

Don't think your children will believe in the power of Christ to change a life if they see no change in you! You will negate your opportunity to witness to your children if you don't live for Jesus yourself.

A little boy asked his dad one day, "Daddy, what is a Christian?" The dad thought for a moment, because he wanted to give a good answer to such an important question. Finally, he said, "A Christian is a person who loves and obeys God. He loves his friends, his neighbors, and even his enemies. He is kind and gentle and prays a lot. He looks forward to going to heaven and thinks that knowing God is better than anything on this earth. That, son, is a Christian."

The little boy sat quiet for a minute, and then he said, "Daddy, have I ever seen a Christian?"

As a Christian parent, if you are going to raise your children right, you must share Christ with them and show Christ to them. You must teach your children about Christ!

Conclusion

The children's Sunday school teacher asked the class, "Why do you love God?" There were a number of different answers, but the best came from a little boy who said, "I guess it just runs in the family."

It is God's intent that Christian parents bring up their children according to the mandates of His Word. Godly moms and dads are supposed to produce godly children.

For this to happen, and for parents to raise their kids right, fathers and mothers are going to have to treat their children with care, train their children through commitment, and teach their children about Christ.

Your kids don't need perfect parents, but they do need godly ones. The greatest thing you can do for your children is to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Family Value

God's Requirement for Parent

In view of the true condition of all people, including children, what should a Christian parent do? He must read the Bible. Christian family values do not come from politicians, judges, or professors, but only from the one book which is in accordance with reality – the Bible, the very word of God. Therefore, a Christian parent should study the Scriptures daily and diligently so that God's family values will be coming from God the Father through the human father into a family. If a Christian parent refuses to study the word of God daily and diligently, he will have nothing to offer his family in terms of family values. He will instead subscribe to and teach the secular orthodoxies prevalent in the world.

In the book of Deuteronomy, God gave divine instruction several times to fathers. In Deuteronomy 11:18-20 we read, "Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul." Why did God say this to fathers? Before a father can teach God's family values and require his children to come under them, he himself must come under the regulation of the Scripture. A father must study God's word, love God's word, embrace God's word, and do God's word. So we read, "Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates. . ." Why did God instruct his people to write his words on the gates and doorframes of their houses? Because by doing so, they would be declaring to the whole world that their homes were holy homes whose residents were separated from the world and living under the regulation of the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

What would be the result of following these instructions? “That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.” (Deuteronomy 11:21). God himself promised that families who did these things would be blessed, successful, and wise.

Parents, we are to fix God’s words on our hearts and minds, and impress them upon our children, as we are told in Deuteronomy 6:7-9. Do we try to impress them with bigger houses, bigger cars, and bigger everything else? What about impressing our children with Scripture, which points them to an eternal, infinite, almighty, all-glorious Creator/Redeemer God?

The Example of Eli

In the early chapters of the book of 1 Samuel, we read about a father named Eli. Eli’s name means “God is high,” which speaks about a transcendent God. This man Eli was also a priest as well as a father, meaning he was responsible to read, study, teach and counsel from the word of God both to his children and to the people of Israel.

Did Eli do this? No. In 1 Samuel 2:27 we read, “And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house?” In other words, God was asking Eli, “Did I not give you a book? What did you do with it?” Christianity is a religion of revelation, meaning God reveals it to us through his book, the Bible. Of all the world religions, Christianity is the only religion with undeniable revelation. Only the Bible gives us God’s revelation as to what reality is, who God is, who people are and how they can be saved, what family values are, what husbands, wives, fathers, mothers and children should do. It is all in the book.

So, God asked Eli, “Did I not clearly reveal myself . . .?” Yes, Eli had the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Holy Bible, with him. He was supposed to study it, meditate upon it, love it, embrace it,

teach it, and counsel with it. Did he do these things? No. He neglected the specific, peculiar duties given to him by God. Even though he was the high priest, the one appointed to stand between God and man, Eli was fascinated by the world and secularism. In fact, rather than giving his children names with God in them, like Abijah, which means “my father is Jehovah,” he gave his children Egyptian names, such as Hophni, which means tadpole. Every time he saw Hophni, he then could say, there is Tadpole! Eli was fascinated by tadpoles, but not by the word of God.

Fathers, I must ask you, what are you fascinated by? Are you governing your families with secular philosophies and worldly nonsense? Or are you teaching them God’s ways and God’s values?

Because Eli was not reading or meditating upon the word of God, the Bible, he was not thinking about God’s ways. When a woman named Hannah came to the house of God to deal with her sorrow and grief before God, Eli observed her praying and weeping. As Hannah poured out her heart to God, what Eli noticed was that her lips were moving but no sound was coming forth. Did Eli interpret her behavior properly? He looked at Hannah and asked, “How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.” Like many preachers who completely conform to the patterns of this world, Eli was confused, unwise, and not able to discern. Here was a godly woman praying in deep distress and sorrow to God, and this preacher, this priest, this so-called man of the book, was looking upon her as a drunken, worthless woman. Eli’s words displayed the deep degeneracy of this father to whom God had entrusted his book. How had he fallen so low? He neglected God’s book, day in and day out.

How did God respond to Eli’s unfaithfulness? In 1 Samuel 2:35 he told him, “And I will raise me up a faithful priest.” God was saying, Eli, you are unfaithful. Not only that, your children are also unfaithful and disloyal to me. You neglected the book that I gave you. You have been an unfaithful father, too busy to study my book from which my family values come.

What about us? Are we too busy making money, watching television, entertaining ourselves, or adding onto our houses, to study the word of God? Do we do everything else, but neglect the one thing that is needful, which is to be witnesses to the eternal, almighty God and his law? God told Eli, “And I will raise me up a faithful priest.” We must remember that no person is indispensable. God can always raise up a faithful priest. When we do our own thing and neglect witnessing for God and being the light of God in the world, God abandons us and raises up a Samuel.

The Problems of Eli

In 1 Samuel 2:29 God asked Eli, “Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation?” In Greek language, it reads “Why do you kick my sacrifice. . .” Deuteronomy 32:15 says “But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.” Eli scorned and kicked God’s sacrifice, which is a dangerous thing to do, because sacrifice is God’s way of salvation.

By scorning God’s sacrifice, Eli and his sons were rejecting the way of the cross. Why did they do that? They hated it. The cross represents the salvation God offers us through the death of his Son. It is foolishness to the Greeks and a stumbling block to the world. But Eli and his sons were saying, “We don’t need salvation. We are okay. We all are good. There is no problem with us.” That is what kicking is.

What about us? Have we grown sleek and fat? Have we become so powerful with the money and strength God has given us that now we kick God and his sacrifice? What about our children? Do they have any interest in God or fear of God and his word? Or do they merely tolerate church, having no desire or love for it? If the latter is true, they are kicking. Oh,

fathers, mothers, young men and women, we need to think about these things! We are to love, cherish, embrace, and thank God for his sacrifice. Are we doing that, or are we kicking it and treating it as despicable and contemptuous?

Jesus Christ was crucified for our sins. What if you have a Ph.D.? Many brilliant people look at the Bible, which speaks about sin, salvation, Christ's blood, and God. If they do not like those things, they kick, and then they support their arguments against God with some ideas they learned in school. But if you kick against God in this way, remember what God told Saul of Tarsus: "It is not good for you to kick against the pricks" (Acts 26:14, author paraphrase). You will find God as strong and powerful as pricks. You will not survive when you kick against God's plan of salvation.

What else did Eli do? He forgot the Bible and indulged in the world. Look at 1 Samuel 2:29: "... and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?" This question reveals an important fact, that Eli was a self-indulgent, hedonistic glutton. He forgot about God, and therefore, he despised God's sacrifices. When people brought their meat for sacrifice, Eli's servants asked for the raw meat even before it was offered to God, as was prescribed. If the worshipers did not give it to them, the servants took it by force. Then Eli and his sons ate and ate and ate. They became corpulent. This can happen to us as well. We may neglect God, prayer, Bible study, and family devotions, but we will be eating, won't we? We can easily fall into a gluttonous, self-indulgent, hedonistic, pleasure-loving lifestyle. If we do so, it means we have learned the taste of another kind of joy, not the joy of serving the Lord.

Eli had another problem resulting from his neglect of the Bible. The Bible says one should worship God alone. But in 1 Samuel 2:29 God asked, "honourest thy sons above me?" In

Hebrew the word for honor or glory is *chabod*, heavy. It means, “Why do you make your sons heavy and not me?” God is the glorious, heavy, all-worthy one. Think about His perfections and attributes—His infinity, wisdom, transcendence, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, holiness, justice, and goodness. He alone is the heavy one whom we should honor.

Eli honored his sons more than God. When we don’t read and study the word of God, we stop seeing God and we put all our value in our children. Do you worship your children and treat them as glorious? Do you live and slave for your children, thinking they are so cute or so great? We might consider our children as worthy to be worshipped, but let me assure you, there is only one who truly is worthy to be worshiped. “Thou art worthy, God Almighty, Creator of the ends of the earth and the Upholder of all reality.” God alone must be worshiped. If we worship our children and make them more honorable than God, God will deal with that which we worship. He is a jealous God and will become an enemy of our idols. In Isaiah 42:8 and 48:11 God says he will not share his glory with another. He will not put up with any man, woman, or child who takes away from the manifest glory of the eternal God. If someone tries, God will wage war against that person. He opposes all idols.

The Consequences of Neglect

First Samuel 3:13 tells us what happened when Eli abandoned the Bible. God said, “For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.” Eli never restrained his sons. Is that true of you? When children are very young you can restrain them, and that is the time to require them to respect you and God Almighty, and to require them to obey God the first time he gives a command. But Eli failed to restrain his children. He had been told

many times to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, but he failed.

The Septuagint says Eli failed and then uses the word *noutheteo*, which means to put the word of God into his children's minds to make them love it, obey it, and walk in the light of it. He failed to impress the word of God upon them exactly as it is. Fathers, you can be impressed by many things—toys, cars, houses, computers—but let me ask you, are you impressed by the word of God? If you are, you will impress your children with it. You will place it into their minds in such a way that it makes an indelible impression upon those children forever and ever. Such children will never let the word of God fall to the ground.

Eli should have done this when his children were very young, and many of us should have done so too. I know this sermon will cause some to feel grief and regret because you were busy watching television, and now your children want nothing to do with God. If this is so, we cannot do much now. What you sow, you reap. Eli should have removed his sons from their priestly office, but he did not. In fact, he indulged them, perhaps, as one commentary said, because he was afraid of them. But he should have dealt with his sons. God made provision in the law for children who treated parents and others with contempt. In Deuteronomy 21:18-21, he said that such children should be killed. Even though you can't do that today, but you can disown the child until he comes back to his senses. But Eli did not do that. Rather, he favored and worshipped his own children and neglected God.

What a pathetic situation! Eli's sons were indulged when they were babies and they grew up into monsters. He had failed to bring his children under the authority of the Lord by teaching them to obey their parents. He failed to learn the total depravity of man. He thought children were born good and he allowed them to express themselves freely. So, you read their story. These children despised God's sacrifices. They despised worship. They became gluttons and

introduced temple prostitution. They were called wicked men (1 Samuel 2:12). They did not fear God. They did not love God. They had no relationship with God. Eli was scared and could not restrain them. When he told them that he heard of the wicked things they did, including sleeping with the women who served at the Tent of Meeting, all he could say was that this was not a good report. And how did his sons react? They did not listen (1 Samuel 2:25).

In view of these things, I must ask all fathers to examine yourselves. Are you indulgent? Are you gluttonous? Are you self-serving? Are you kicking the sacrifices? Are you raising up monsters? Are you afraid of your own children? If these things are true of you, I grieve with you.

A Faithful Priest

What does God expect Christian parents to require of their children? First time obedience performed in the fear of the Lord. Because God expects this, we have no authority to change His requirement and engage in an indulgent lifestyle.

In the context of rampant apostasy of that time, and especially found within Eli's family, we see a little boy, Samuel, who was given to Hannah in answer to her prayer. Samuel was a Nazirite, meaning he was devoted to God all of his life. Samuel could never cut his hair, he was forbidden to eat grapes or any grape product, and he could never touch anything that was dead. In other words, Samuel was raised up by God to live his entire life in obedience to God's law. This should encourage us. We may deplore secularism, moral darkness, and all kinds of terrible situations in our modern world, but should we despair? No. In times of extreme darkness, God has His people, His children, who want to live in holiness and separation for God all their lives.

In 1 Samuel 3 God called Samuel, who was then about twelve years of age, while he was sleeping probably in the next room to Eli, the corpulent, despicable priest. Samuel had learned first time

obedience, and when God called his name, Samuel woke out of sleep, saying, “Here I am” (1 Samuel 3:5). What did he mean by “Here I am”? Samuel was accustomed to obedience. “Here I am” meant he acknowledged the authority of another and his own servanthood. Samuel woke up, ready to serve, and then what did he do? He ran to serve, by running to Eli. Let me ask you, when you call your children, do they say, “Here I am,” run to you, and stand, saying, “Here I am; you called me”?

This was Samuel’s response even when he was first roused from sleep. This is what God expects from all of us—fathers, mothers, and children. When he calls, we need to rise up and say, “Here I am,” and then run to him, expecting to receive further direction. Why should we do that? The characteristic of a servant of God is obedience. In Genesis chapter twenty-two, when God called, Abraham said, “Here I am.” In Exodus chapter three, when God called Moses, he responded, “Here I am.” When God called Isaiah in Isaiah chapter six, what did Isaiah say? He said, “Here I am.” God cannot put up with people who will not respond to him as servants. Servants hear and run.

When Samuel woke Eli, Eli said, “I did not call; go back and lie down.” Samuel lay down and God called him again. How did Samuel respond? He said, “Here I am,” and ran to Eli. You see, this is what we need to learn. Children need to learn to obey their parents because that is the only thing God is requiring from them, and that is the only thing that we, as parents, should require from them. God requires parents to teach this to their children. If children are taught to respond to parents, they are happy children. “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right” (Ephesians 6:1).

Fathers, have you required obedience of your children? Or have you become marshmallows, just wanting to eat, relax, lie down and not be bothered? When Samuel came to Eli the second time, Eli said again, “I did not call; go and lie down.” When God called a third time,

what did Samuel do? Again, he responded,” Here I am,” and ran to Eli. “Here I am; you called me.”

Samuel obeyed every time. Every time! We need to notice that. And as he came again and again, it finally occurred to Eli that God was speaking. You see, God had long since refused to speak to Eli. When God does not speak to a person, it means He has abandoned him. When we read the Bible, come to church, or pray, but nothing happens, it means God has abandoned us. That is a serious situation. It is a famine of the word of God, as we read in Amos 8:11-12, when people stagger and wander about, looking not for bread but for the word of God. God had abandoned Eli and no prophet had spoken to him for a long time. Why had this happened? Eli had refused to listen to God. But finally, it occurred to him that God was speaking. As Eli thought of this, I am sure that he felt great grief as he realized that God was speaking not to Eli but to the boy, Samuel. Eli the priest had been abandoned by God.

So, Eli told Samuel, ‘Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, “Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth” ‘. Again, a fourth time God called: “Samuell!” Samuel’s first-time obedience, which he had practiced throughout his life, now was very useful. Samuel replied to God, “Speak, for thy servant heareth.” And now for the first time in his life, Samuel heard from God directly with his mind. What did God say? He told Samuel he was going to destroy Eli and his children.

God’s Judgment Comes

After God spoke to him, Samuel lay down again. In the morning, as he went about his duties, he opened the doors of the house of the Lord and Eli called him: “Samuell!” What was Samuel’s response? “Here I am.” That was the fifth time we read this: “Here I am!” What a benefit to train children to obey the first time! Every time Samuel was called, he responded, “Here I am!” Do you require that from your children? You should, because that is the stepping stone for them to

hear from God. A child's respect for a parent's authority is the stepping stone for them to hear from God.

Eli put Samuel under an oath and asked, "What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee?" and Samuel told Eli everything God had spoken. He told Eli how God was going to destroy him because he had neglected God's word, and glorified and worshiped his children. God had seen how Eli had indulged his children and had even been a party to their indulgence, as evidenced by his own corpulence.

Was this word from God a joke? No. In 1 Samuel chapter four we read that the Israelites went to war against the Philistines. In the first battle, how many Israelites died? Four thousand. Did this cause the Israelites to stop and pray to see if there was any sin among them that they needed to repent of? No. They had become a pagan society. They sent for the Ark of the Covenant. They reasoned that God was somehow tied to the ark, and if the ark was present, God would help them. So, they brought the ark and fought again against the Philistines. How many people died in the second battle? Thirty thousand. Who else died? Tadpole—Hophni—and his brother Phinehas were killed.

A Benjamite ran to Shiloh with news of the battle. Eli, who was now blind and very heavysset because of his indulgent lifestyle, was sitting by the side of the road. The Benjamite gave his report: "Israel fled," he began. Then he continued, "The army has suffered heavy losses. Also, your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead." But the final news was the worst: "And the ark of God is taken," meaning God Himself was gone. When Eli heard that, he fell backward, broke his neck and died.

That was not the end of God's threats. In 1 Samuel 2:31-33 God said that because Eli had honored his sons more than God, He would cut short Eli's strength and the strength of everyone in his clan. The descendants of Eli would not live to old age. We read later in 1 Samuel 22 how Saul's servant Doeg destroyed eighty-five priests in the town of Nob, as well as all the other men, women, children and animals in

that town. This destruction was part of God's judgment on Eli and his house.

Are We Honoring God?

It is not good to kick against God and His Scriptures. I must ask you, fathers: Are you working so hard that you neglect God's word? Are you so busy luxuriating and indulging that you do not require your children to obey you the first time? If so, you are kicking against God. If this is true of you, soon you will see God as an enemy, and it will not be good for you. If you neglect God and do not honor His word, one day you will be filled with regret.

There was another father in the Old Testament named Joshua. In Joshua chapter twenty-four, he gave his people the choice of serving foreign gods, such as the gods of the new land of Canaan, or the gods of Ur of the Chaldeans, or the living, true God—the Creator, Redeemer and Lord of the covenant. They had a choice! “But,” said Joshua, “as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15).

Think about it. Fathers, are you functioning as a prophet in your home, representing the Prophet, Jesus Christ? Do you articulate God's word to your family and require obedience to it from them? Are you a priest, representing the High Priest, Jesus Christ, in your home? Do you minister to your family about salvation through Jesus Christ and forgiveness of sins? Do you pray and intercede for them? Are you a king, representing the King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ? Do you control and restrain your children? Is there order in your home?

When we worship our children, they become Ichabods, which means people without glory. But when we worship God and honor Him, our children become glorious. Samuel served the Lord under Eli and learned first time obedience. We are told he received favor from man and God and lived in the presence of God. Even though everyone else was living in great darkness and apostasy, Samuel

enjoyed great communion with the living God, and his fame spread from Dan to Beersheba.

At the beginning of 1 Samuel chapter three, we read that “and the word of the Lord was precious in those days,” but it concludes by saying that “and the Lord appeared again in Shiloh, for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord.” The word became plentiful. Let me assure you, when you read the word of God and it grips you, what does that mean? It means that God is pleased with you. When you pray and you delight in doing so, it means that God is communing with you.

May we soberly examine our ways. Do we want the favor of God, the presence of God, and the fame of God? If so, let us learn to revere the word of God and the God of the word. May we be delivered from self-indulgence, from gluttony, from the love of this world and from laziness. May we become people of the book and practice true, biblical family values, that we and our children will bring glory to God and in the process become glorious ourselves. Amen.

Educational Value

The Mother as An Educator

Mother is the first and the best teacher – proverb

The family enables children’s protection and that suggestively makes parents responsible for their development and to make their children grow with a holistic personality (Good, 1988). The role of the woman or the mother as an educator represents a crucial resource to the development of the individual identity, which from researchers is seen as even more important as the very marital status of the parents and the occupation of the parents themselves. It seems that the feeling of being a mother is more powerful to the woman than the feeling of being a father of a given child is to the husband. Always in accordance to the biological as well as physiological relation of the mother to the

child, this represents the first and reasonable part or segment of the child's development. It is for this reason that the mother assures the child's life, as she is the one who brings the child in to this world, and further on she raises them from being little towards reaching a total independency in mature life.

The mother's function in this regard, has a very important role which as such may be divided into two parts or directions: The first one is related to the child's defense, while the other one to the child's overall development. Mother's protection as a function embeds several types of actions or types of functions. The 1st type is connected to the physical protection of the child, which means that the child must be provided with healthcare and hygienic conditions so that he or she can have a healthy life in a warm home environment in every sense of the word, which includes the ambiance where the child lives, which must be well lit, and a healthy place which allows the child to be showered, fed and taken care of in general. The 2nd type is the psychological protection, which can be reflected through the child's emotional security and psychological protection, especially in moments when the child feels when the mother is next to him or her.

Another group of activities in this regard are the maternal functions regarding the child's development which involves the physical development, intellectual development as well as the emotional development.

Each child that grows up and is educated in the presence of the mother, for sure is expected to reach an appropriate physical, psychological as well as social development. In this regard, these children have a much better appearance, they look happy and they enjoy the childhood in general. They are communicative and as such they are ready to cooperate.

For this reason, the mother's love and care to the child is full and well completed, and as such is often accepted by other

members of the very family. This type of cultivated love and affection can be qualified as a key condition for an appropriate development of the children in a given family. The children experience the physical as well as psychological effects of the mother, and as such they are taken as the model which influences their further development during the emotional stage of development of their moral values as a whole. This element of the so-called child's identification is embedded in the child's personality for years on throughout his or her total lifespan. It is planted in their character as well as temperament, and as such it is reflected through his or her attitudes and thoughts in their interaction or behavior compartment with the society in general.

Almost all culture has developed arrangements which enable mothers to provide for basic child care while maintaining other duties that are instrumental to the family well – being.

However, depending on the economic, social as well as emotional limitations, mothers nowadays have a variety of opportunities to be able to reach or make real their role, which helps the child's overall development and enables mothers to enjoy the fact of being a mother. The modern experiences show quite frequent derailments from this path of action, which as such can be illustrated by the presence of single mothers, mothers coming from unemployed backgrounds, under-age mothers etc.

The Father as An Educator

The father in a family is a very important factor when it comes to the organization of a nice and appropriately functional development of a household, with a specific accent on the children. Helping fathers be the 'best fathers they can be' is therefore of enormous importance to children. A good father must be a good parent and a good husband. This person is an extremely important factor in the organization of the family life

as a whole, which is the basic grounds toward a happy and joyful life for all the members of a family. Many young fathers want to do things better than how they have experienced in their lives.

His presence in the family is important because it leads the family members, particularly the children, to have a feeling of safety in their lives.

In these circumstances of safety, the children are the ones who benefit mostly. However, the so-called subjective experiencing of the parents by their children varies in different ways and family models, and as such his relevance in a family is much more different from the one that is performed by mothers. As a result of the gender prejudices in terms of the duties to be performed in their family, especially regarding their approach and contribution toward their children's education, it turns out that mothers are more prepared than fathers to undertake their role in their children's education. Fathers make a powerful difference in defining expectation and challenging children to do their best.

As such, the children learn their responsibilities and roles in the family early enough, and when they themselves grow up and become parents, they will be mature to play the father's role. Given this theory, much research has been done which proves that the relationship between father and child becomes stronger. This relationship does not need to be dependent from either of the other two relations, that is, the one between father and child or the one between mother and child.

In order to have successfully brought up and well-educated children in one family, parents are crucial and they must be aware of some elements which play a key role in raising, bringing up and educating their children. Firstly, while the parents' principal role in the family is the education and the bringing up of their children, the main obligation of their children is to study harder and properly. For this aim, they need to be well

instructed on how to study based on rules and principles of appropriate learning and studying. This approach would open to them the doors of the world of a behaviorist attitude toward the work, giving them the chance to get to know better the relevance of working as one of the main behaviorist elements of the human kind.

Secondly, the development of the child is in fact an overall child's personality formation. The parents as educators must be able to recognize the basic features of their child, interests, temperament and especially the child's emotional features regarding the child's character.

Thirdly, the child's personality formation is constructed mostly based on the child's socialization in general. The socialization process nowadays represents the most important one of all other processes involved in his formation as a child. Thus, the child commences to socialize within a given society beginning from the early stage of his or her childhood at the parents' home, circled by parental atmosphere and the relationship between family members in general. In this entourage, the child makes the first steps in the society, manifesting the basic features of behavior, which as such are the fundamentals of further social development and integration of the child in a given society.

Conclusion

From all that was said so far, we may conclude that education in the premises of a family life has a double meaning: Firstly, it must be seen through the perspective of its contribution to the overall upbringing and education of the child, which is crucial to the proper formation of the child's personality, and furthermore, to his or her preparation for leading an independent life. On the other hand, the focus must be put on the family as a whole, and the role of children which must be based on their approach and contribution concerning family problems,

which should be dealt with and finally solved by them. Educational support offered to children from their parents, concerning issues such as homework, would help children to create an everyday routine of learning. This approach should be stimulated by the parents themselves, by praising, vaunting and rewarding the children based on the way they perform a task. This approach would raise within the children the sense of respecting the other family members. Using this education and up-bringing methods of raising children, may be considered as one of the best known examples of a positive overall approach to the educative and formational function of the children, who later on become successful grown-up citizens.

Offering educational support to them from their parents concerning issues such as preparing their homework, on the other hand, creates the so-called habits of every day routine of action to the learning process, which makes the parents vaunt and praise them, thus creating and strengthening better mutual communication between the parents and children. And again, rewarding and praising the child is a real stimulator toward a better mutual respect and closeness between all members as a compact family.

Communication Plan

You and your spouse and anybody that comes to live with you in your home; no matter the length of days the person will stay with you, he or she must follow through to achieve your godly goal for your family.

Method of Communication?

Positive Communication with Young Children

A child's ability to manage stress, feel confident and motivate themselves in later life has a lot to do with their early childhood experiences. A person's 'self-concept' is their sense of who they are and how they feel about their place in their family and community. This begins to develop between the ages of two and six years. Positive

relationships between parents and children are an important part of building a child's positive self-concept. A child who feels constantly blamed, judged and criticized may grow up to become an adult with a negative self-concept.

Listen to Your Children

If you want your child to be a good listener, make sure you're a good role model. Take the time to listen to them. Busy, distracted parents tend to tune out a chattering child, which is understandable from time to time. If you constantly ignore your child, however, you send the message that listening isn't important and that what your child has to say isn't important to you.

Some suggestions include:

- ☼ Pay attention to what your child is saying whenever you can.
- ☼ Make sure to allocate some time every day to simply sit and listen to your child if you have a busy schedule.
- ☼ Encourage your child's ideas and opinions. Positive communication is a two-way street in which both parties take turns listening and talking.
- ☼ Resist the urge to correct their grammatical errors or finish their sentences – concentrate instead on what they are trying to say.
- ☼ Allow important or difficult issues to be discussed without the fear of over-reaction, criticism or blame.

Communicating with Your Baby

A baby's brain is 'hard-wired' to pay attention to the sound of a human voice. Their mastery of language depends on listening to you speak. Long before your baby can form understandable words, they will respond to you with noises, facial expressions and body language.

You can actively listen to your baby and encourage their language development in many ways, including:

- ☼ Accept that crying is your baby's primary method of communication.

- ☼ Attend to their needs as soon as you can once they start crying, to let them know they have been acknowledged and understood.
- ☼ Spend some time actively listening to your baby's cooing and noise-making by looking them in the eye and encouraging them with smiles and talk.
- ☼ Talk to your baby frequently about anything and everything. You can also read to them from books and the daily paper.

Communicating with Your Toddler

A toddler may have a vocabulary of two hundred or so words and can start stringing words together to make simple sentences. Mastering grammar and sentence construction is difficult and your toddler will make plenty of mistakes.

You can encourage your toddler's language development in many ways, such as:

- ☼ It is more important to listen attentively to your child than to correct their grammatical errors.
- ☼ Allow your toddler sufficient time to finish what they are trying to say.
- ☼ Don't show impatient body language, such as sighing or foot-tapping.
- ☼ Answer any questions using simple language.
- ☼ Spend some time each day doing nothing else but talking exclusively with your toddler.
- ☼ A child that constantly interrupts adult conversations may be feeling starved of attention.

Communicating with An Older Child

By the time your child is in their later years of primary school, their language and ability to convey ideas has improved a lot. They even alter their speech to suit the circumstances. They may speak more formally in front of a teacher than they do with family and friends.

You can show that you are actively listening to your older child in many ways, including:

- ☼ Make time every day to listen exclusively to your child without distractions.
- ☼ If your child tends to give ‘yes’ and ‘no’ answers, try asking open-ended questions such as ‘What was the best thing about school today?’
- ☼ Allow your child to have differences of opinion and respect their point of view.
- ☼ Try not to interrupt, lecture or criticize.

Build Up Positive Self-Esteem in Young Children

Positive, encouraging words help children to feel confident and happy. Suggestions include:

- ☼ Notice when they are being good. Praise them for tidying up their rooms or taking turns. Praise reinforces good behavior.
- ☼ Thank them for helping you around the house or at the supermarket.
- ☼ Let them know you have faith in their abilities. A child who is constantly told to be careful or that they will hurt themselves will eventually lose confidence in their abilities.
- ☼ Allow them plenty of opportunities to do things they enjoy and do well. Feeling competent builds self-esteem.
- ☼ Praise their efforts, not just their results. A child needs to know that it is okay to fail.

- ☼ Try to avoid always correcting your child's mistakes. Trial and error are part of every child's life. Your child may feel discouraged and hopeless if all their efforts are marked or criticized.
- ☼ Separate the child from their behavior. Disapprove of the activity, not the child. For a child's positive sense of self, it is better to say 'drawing on the walls was a naughty thing to do' rather than 'you're a naughty child'. Your child needs to know that your love is unconditional.
- ☼ Don't assume that they know how much you love them – tell them often.
- ☼ Tell the child what you do want them to do rather than what you don't. In most cases, it's simple to turn a negative sentence into a positive one. For example, instead of saying 'Don't walk so close to the road', say 'Come and walk next to me'.

Body Language Communication with Young Children

Actions speak louder than words. Remember that the way you say something is important. Suggestions include:

- ☼ Squat down to the same level as the child instead of towering over them.
- ☼ Maintain eye contact with young children. Remember, though, that older children and adolescents often don't like this, so chatting while you're walking along or driving in the car can be more effective.
- ☼ Smile. A child will respond better to a smile than a frown.
- ☼ Avoid talking to them when your back is turned or when you are walking away from them.
- ☼ Use a gentle tone of voice, especially if tempers are starting to fray. Yelling only encourages more anger.

- ☼ Cuddle children often (no matter how old they are).
- ☼ Avoid impatient body language like eye rolling, foot tapping or sighing. This can discourage a child from talking.

CHAPTER SIX

PARENTS' STEPS TO SUCCESS TWO

When parents think about what a child should know by the time they are five, they frequently prepare them with the skills they will need when they start school. We want to know that kids are capable of performing fundamental tasks like buttoning their coat and counting to ten. While these abilities are unquestionably crucial and serve as the cornerstone of a smooth transition to primary school, it is their moral principles that will really create the groundwork for who they become, both now and in the years to come. So, what are the most crucial moral lessons you need to impart to your child between the ages of 0 and 5?

“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.”

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

“The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just.”

Proverbs 3:33

It is common to hear complaints that the children of pious parents fall short of the expectations that are typically and naturally formed. It is true that this happens far too frequently, and that in some cases, children of pious parents who have received an excellent education will, when they overcome the constraints of education and habit, become excessively wicked and may even perish in their wickedness, like Eli's and David's children. In these severe situations,

either some serious neglect of parental responsibilities occurred or bad friendships were formed with others. Under such terrible circumstances, every Christian parent is at least silent before God and acutely aware of his own sinfulness.

But in the end, the majority of Christian piety in a nation will be found to be in the pious generation; and though God demonstrates his own power by occasionally selecting a prominent agent of good from the most evil, he also demonstrates the riches and the fullness of his own promises by saying, “The generation of the upright is blessed.” If you raise a child in the route he or she should go, even as an adult, he or she will not swerve from it.

It can be helpful to briefly mention some reasons for failure as well as the strategies for a successful Christian education.

When examining the reasons for failure, we must first note the rejection of one of the most crucial theological tenets—that all children are by nature born in sin and are children of wrath—a due knowledge of which lies at the core of all success in this task. They receive a carnal thinking from their parents, which is hostile toward God. No matter how religious a parent is, his nature is corrupt, and it passes to his offspring. They inherit that nature from us, and any educational accomplishment must be attributable to God blessing our efforts and bestowing His grace so that they can triumph against their innate corruption.

Even in things that may seem beautiful and delightful to the world’s eyes, the Christian parent will constantly be on the lookout for the workings of this perversion. He will be content with nothing other than that which is the fruit of the Spirit and so superior to nature. While he will promote and cultivate anything admirable and praiseworthy, he will be especially concerned that everything of this nature stems from Christian principle and not just from a desire for attention from others.

One of the most frequent causes of failure is parents who are indulgent because they idolize their kids. This is what caused Eli's and David's children to perish, and it manifests itself in a wide range of ways, including indulgence in one's appetite, appearance, or pleasures, giving in to requests that are obviously inappropriate, and prioritizing the satisfaction of one's present desires over securing one's future, spiritual well-being, and highest good.

Christian parents' inconsistencies in their behavior and language have a very negative impact on their kids. Children readily and most naturally absorb the spirit of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life displayed by a parent. They are imitation-based organisms in many spheres, but they are particularly adept at mimicking wrongdoing. The youngster very quickly imitates the parents' poor tempers, haughtiness, and self-will. Their children naturally develop such excessive thoughts and feelings as a result of their parents' appreciation of wealth, prestige, or talent. Our misdeeds thus afflict us through our descendants.

The best-laid educational strategies frequently fail when children are permitted to make inappropriate associations with people who are older or more mature than them, especially the latter. Children are so easily seduced by phony claims of wisdom superior to their own, as well as empty promises of liberty and pleasure, that even one evening spent immersed in the allure of worldly society can permanently disturb and harm their impressionable minds.

It is enjoyable to think about those situations that occasionally arise, like in the households of Mr. Richmond, where more satisfying results have been attained, notwithstanding the usual concerns of Christian parents about their lack of accomplishment in raising their children.

The question, which is both fascinating and crucial, is: Where does this difference come from?

The notion of God's sovereignty is a common source of comfort and, almost, justification in circumstances of an unfortunate description.

However, this grand and solemn theory is frequently invoked as a defense for parental negligence when it would be equally acceptable to use it as justification for exposing your child to a plague or for depriving him of medical care when he is ill.

The cases mentioned above and others that are common enough to constitute a rule rather than an exception demonstrate that when particular methods are employed, the expected outcomes can be anticipated to follow. In most cases, the failure of the parent's hopes can be attributed to their own deficiencies in conduct.

However, when discussing ways that a word may be insufficient, it is preferable to use that word as broadly as possible to consider it as including the entirety of the parent's duty to the child rather than just a particular routine of responsibilities.

Love is the first and most important duty. It is to be feared that, notwithstanding what may be assumed, this area is the true source of the trouble we are discussing.

Parents lack a profound understanding of the true value and peril of their children's souls! They hope and pray that they will be serious and holy, but it is more of a weak, ineffective want than the passionate desire or constant worry that not the kind of love that inspired Paul to exclaim, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." (Galatians 4:19).

Cold and formal prayers, uttered out of obligation rather than out of the deepest longing of the soul, flow from these feeble aspirations and lax wishes. Monica the mother of Augustine says, "I will not let you go till you bless me!" yet there is no grappling for the kids. These are neither faith-based prayers, nor can we expect them to result in blessings because the Bible says, "Whatever you shall ask, believing, you shall receive." They are frequently presented out of a bare sense

of obligation, with no real hope that they would receive a response. With such feeble and weak hints of heavenly concerns, one may anticipate that their offspring would be securely rooted in the earth if one is discounted, the other will inevitably be overvalued in the same proportion. The problems of eternity are gladly postponed in favor of the interests of the present life, which leads to a variety of temptations.

A Christian dad previously abandoned his son to several temptations and out of the reach of the public means of grace because of his hopes for achieving success in the world. Soon after, the son went to see his father, and during family worship, the dad prayed for the boy's protection from all the dangers he faced. 'Why does my father place me in the devil's mouth and then ask God to prevent the devil from consuming me?' The young man wondered. Surely, it must have hurt the parent greatly to have prompted such contemplation from a child?

The end result of this half-Christian, half-worldly course of action is the upbringing of a race of young people familiar with religious teachings but lacking any meaningful sense of its power. Thus, they are in a worse situation than even the most ignorant because the sound of the gospel hardly ever reaches the latter without some sort of conscience awakening, whereas on the former, everything that can be said simply repeats what has been fully known for years but never deeply or effectively felt.

The character of Mr. Richmond, followed by his ardent love for his children's souls, never-ending worry, continual vigilance, daily and hourly prayers, not out of form but out of faith, provide collectively an example to which Christian parents' attention might be most effectively focused.

One of the major risks to which the church is particularly subject in this period of widespread profession is resting in the outward appearance of virtue without its life and power. That is, "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof....." (2 Timothy 3:5). Parents must be very careful not to unwittingly encourage their

children's most hazardous self-deception by giving them credit for true regeneration and conversion, where there has been nothing more than excited natural feelings without any real spiritual change. When the young possess nothing more than what naturally amiable dispositions under religious culture may easily produce, they are soon overset in the rough sea of this world's trials and temptations. Let parents beware of speaking too soon about peace and rest to an awakened mind, or a troubled conscience.

The next thing to note is the NATURE of an effective Christian education. And rather than focusing on issues that are too frequently overlooked, including prompt obedience and respect for parents, we would instead draw attention to issues that are commonly accepted.

1. The first step is to accurately understand the underlying basis for our achievement aspirations. This is no less reliable than the certain promises found in God's Word, many of which are held dear to the hearts of Christian parents. Knowing this basis is crucial, as is acting on these promises with humility and simplicity while patiently waiting for God to fulfill them in His own time through faith, prayer, and consistent behavior.
2. To this, we must add a firm understanding of the one and only ruling factor in success—God our Father's free and abundant grace. None of His offspring are produced by the will of the flesh, the blood, or the will of man, but only by the will of God. The main rule for achieving our children's spiritual well-being is to cultivate a habit of constantly looking to and habitually depending upon God in daily prayer, in every instruction, and in every plan formed for them. This is the origin, the maintaining and continuing strength, and the ultimate success of all our efforts. Our merciful Redeemer Mark 9:23, 24 is especially receptive to the faith and prayers of a parent.

3. Letting our focus to be solely on their spiritual wellness is another crucial point. To seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness for our children should be an all-directing and governing concept in education. This should have an impact on everything we do about them, including where we put them, who we introduce them to, the books we want them to read, the circumstances we want for them, etc.
4. The diligent and proper use of the means of grace, such as daily scripture reading, prayer, self-examination practices, and regular participation in public worship, is a most essential aid for children. The persistent inculcation of divine truth, however, to which we are so explicitly urged in the scriptures, may be the most crucial of all these methods. “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,” as instructed in Deuteronomy 6:6-9. Particular instruction of the children by themselves, and a mother’s private and individual conversation with them, are also of great import.
5. It is always necessary to practice discipline. The greatest gift a parent can give his country is a well-behaved child. Children who are left alone and who lack established habits of patient and steady application are liable to cause great harm to their fellow beings. Discipline will continuously work to halt, check, and subjugate anything that is improper or prone to improper behavior while igniting and promoting all that is proper. With regard to appetite, pleasures, temper, coveting others’ possessions, forgoing obligations, disorderly behavior, and in

fact all the various occurrences of life, every day presents a new opportunity for its exercise.

6. The severity of the offense must be taken into consideration while determining the appropriate punishment. It is crucial that the scale we use to gauge the severity of wrongdoing be based on the Bible. The harshest punishment is required for sins committed directly against God, and moral transgressions like lying, acting out of emotion and taking something that is not rightfully theirs should never go unpunished. However, careless mishaps should have a reduced punishment because they are not willful errors even though they may result in serious harm to us. The reader will find insightful comments on punishment in this book.
7. Support and promote all that is lovely and wonderful by giving it intelligent Christian approval. All diligence and application in good pursuits should have the parental smile of favor, as all those things which are opposite to these should be discouraged by indications of disapproval. By paying careful attention to all these truth, sincerity, charity, self-denial, and love to others.
8. Vigilantly avoid pursuing amazing things for your kids. Oh, the utter foolishness of trying to gain for them great ties in social classes above them, and of putting them in peril so that they can associate with their superiors! What a mess this has created of the kids of godly parents! Our unambiguous guideline should be to “avoid wonderful things.” “And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not!” Jeremiah 45:5. May God provide us with the grace to follow these plain instructions in His Word. If we put our faith in Him, His providence will guide our children to the settings where they can honestly and safely serve others and exalt His name, sparing us the agony of witnessing them bring dishonor to the gospel of Christ.

9. Our own conduct consistency, which is crucial to the entire impact of a Christian education, is the last item I would point out. What can be predicted but similarly terrible tempers in their children if Christian parents live contrary to their blessed beliefs if they are irritable, greedy, haughty, disorderly, angry, and covetous! But if they possess and exhibit the other Christian graces—poor spirit, meekness, weeping for sin, hungering and thirsting after righteousness—as well as the other characteristics of a Christian, it is a tremendous aid to all of their religious training. The fact that our offspring quickly exhibit similar wicked tendencies is actually a fitting punishment for our sinful behavior. However, a demonstration of holy behavior makes every religious instruction mandatory, and enhances any strong principle that we try to explain to them.

Points to Be Kept in View in A Christian Education.

Spiritual Health.

1. Pray for them first.
2. Continue to inculcate Christian values in them.
3. Approach them in the spirit of the gospel.
4. Keep an eye on their relationships with others.
5. Teach them how to control their emotions.
6. Make sure they assiduously use the means of grace.
7. Keep in mind Satan's constant activity and cunning.

Physical Health.

1. Exercise is to be regularly taken.
2. Temperance in diet is to be observed.
3. Things injurious to health are to be avoided.
4. Early in bed—and early to rise.

Mental Cultivation.

1. Their minds should not be too much pressed.
2. Their minds should be strengthened by reading solid books.
3. Habits of reflection should be formed and called forth.
4. See that they understand their lessons.
5. Habits of self-denial should be formed.
6. Useful things should be especially attended to.

Manners.

1. Kindness is to run through everything they do: their morals, school, play, walks, behavior toward adults and other children.
2. Kindness is to have its true foundation in Christian principle.
3. Kindness to others is a victory over our natural selfishness.
4. Endeavor to promote the happiness of all around us.

Talents and Accomplishments.

1. Talents are of a secondary value.
2. Talents should be a means of relaxation.
3. Talents should commend piety to others.
4. Be sure that talents are innocent.
5. Guard against those talents which will lead them into the world.

The Savior Is All in All.

1. In every point, show them Christ. He is the root of spiritual prosperity. He is the Physician of body and soul. He is the Giver of all of our blessings. He is altogether lovely in all His ways. He is full of gifts and full of grace.
2. Let everything turn the mind to Jesus. In every walk, in every lesson, in every event, in every sin, in every mercy speak of Christ!
3. Let Christ be the sun and the glory of every day.

Means.

1. “My grace is sufficient for you.”
2. “He will give his Holy Spirit to those who ask.”
3. “I am your God, I will strengthen you, yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness.”

CHAPTER SEVEN

PARENTS' STEPS TO SUCCESS THREE

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

— 2 Timothy 3:7-7

Teaching your children Christian principles and values is crucial because it will influence how they treat one another and serve others. It is incumbent to the faithful to carry out their responsibility and uphold their Christian ideals or principles in such challenging times. The following Christian principles will provide kids a chance to grow spiritually. This will enable us to rear godly children in Sodom-like places. They will be better able to follow Christ and have in-depth encounters with God as a result.

God First

A fundamental Christian principle is to put God first, which indicates that one should always seek God's righteousness and entirely rely on Him. Christians have the option to choose whether or not anything is right or wrong, but if we put God first, we will turn to Him for guidance on what is good and wrong. Only when we admit that God is superior to us in all matters pertaining to life and godliness can we truly value Him (2 Peter 1:3-4).

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

— Matthew 6:33

Faith

Despite the fact that it is only normal for children to have faith in their parents, youngsters should also have faith in the Lord. First and foremost, God is true to Himself in that He never wavers from His commitment to love, mercy, justice, and compassion. Parents can instill a sense of faith in their children by repeatedly emphasizing that God is the source of all good things (James 1:17). Christian belief in God is based on Jesus Christ, God’s Son. Because we are required to love all others, this faith and attitude must permeate all other human interactions in our life (Matthew 22:37-40).

“But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.”

— James 1:6

Love

Christian orthodoxy is based on love. Because of God’s undeserved grace and favor shown to us, this undeserved favor is manifested via Him. God gives us eternal life as a gift as part of His love for humanity via the person of Jesus Christ. Our third Christian virtue follows from the most fundamental aspect of love, which is the desire to see the good in people.

“But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.”

— Luke 6:35

Compassion

The best method to instill compassion in our children is to frequently display it in front of and as an example to them. This is why it's crucial to participate in and involve your children in acts of kindness like feeding programs, missions, and servant evangelism initiatives. We must instill in our kids the understanding that compassion is far more than just "feeling bad" for someone.

"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

— 1 Peter 4:10

Hope

Children must be educated from an early age that hope is something they will need in addition to dreams, fantasies, and wishes. A complex feeling, hope. It is made up of a desire for something and an expectation that it will one day be satisfied. Hope is a real belief in God, not just wishful thinking. Hope is the belief in God's benevolence. Hope is said to act as the anchor of the soul for this reason. One of the three most permanent gifts of the Spirit is hope, along with faith and love (1 Corinthians 13:13).

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity (love)."

— 1 Corinthians 13:13

Humility

The principles of the Bible frequently conflict with those of the modern world. Undoubtedly, one of those values is humility. The antithesis of pride, which led to the fall of Satan and countless others, is humility. Everyone who professes to be a Christian wants to be truly humble. Humility ranks highly on the list of attributes that best

describe Christ (Philippians 2). Since so many other virtues flow from humility, it is one of the most critically needed character traits.

“..... If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.”

— Mark 9:35

Integrity

The best approach to instill integrity in children is to constantly remind them that despite the fact that others may not be able to see their deeds, God is always able to and blesses His flock as a result. Because of this, the Bible frequently makes mention of moral purity, character, and integrity. Honesty, dependability, and honor are the byproducts of integrity. We will always act honorably if we have integrity, not only in God’s sight but also in our own.

“To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.”

— Proverbs 21:3

As a parent by living and modeling these Christian values to your children, you can raise Godly Children in Sodom and Sodom-like places.

Communication Plan

Describe the Day.

Encourage your kid to describe his or her day to you in as much detail as they can. What aspects of school were the best and worst? This improves recollection and sequencing, two abilities that children who have difficulty communicating may have trouble with. Also, recount what happened to you today. Say something along the lines of, “I went to the grocery shop today. Guess what I noticed in the produce section?”

Additionally, sharing in this way fosters a bond between you and your child. (For additional suggestions on how to strengthen your relationship, keep reading.)

Listen To And Reflect What Your Child Says.

Demonstrate one of the most crucial conversational skills by paying attention to what others are saying and building on it. After your child has shared something with you, paraphrase a portion of what they said before asking a question. For example: “Wow, that art project sounds like it required a lot of patience. What other project would you find enjoyable to work on? What more supplies would you require?”

Have Practice Conversations with Your Child.

Discuss the circumstances that your youngster might be most apprehensive about. These might involve engaging in conversation with other children while awaiting the bus or sitting next to them at lunch, for instance. Then have your child rehearse possible phrases. So that your child can consider various scenarios, conversation subjects, and reactions, take turns pretending to be each other during the conversation.

Point Out Body Language.

Kids who struggle with communication may not always pick up on other kids’ nonverbal cues. Sometimes these cues are called body language.

For your grade school child, consider showing and explaining body language. You can say, “I’m crossing my arms because I’m feeling angry,” or “When you roll your eyes at me, I feel disrespected.”

Start Fun Conversations with Your Child.

It can be challenging to come up with interesting topics to discuss after a long day. Explore the Family Dinner Project's discussion starter suggestions. Additionally, look at some conversational advice for parents.

Discuss everything from "I think the automobile needs a good washing" to "What was the funniest thing you observed at school today." Should we do it ourselves or take it to a vehicle wash? What do you want the authority over? Bumpers? Vacuuming?"

Read with Your Child.

What you read to your child is irrelevant. The most crucial aspect is that you work together. Do not be alarmed if your child consistently selects the same books to read at bedtime. Your youngster is becoming more knowledgeable about the characters, stories, and words.

Read aloud to one another in turns, even if your toddler only adds a few words here and there. Discuss the setting, plot, characters, and any unfamiliar words that you learned after finishing a book or television program.

Teach Your Child How to Play Conversational "Catch."

Try introducing discussions' back-and-forth flow to your child. Here's an illustration:

- ☼ Player 1 asks a question while hurling a ball. How is school going?
- ☼ Player 2 picks up the ball and responds to the query. Player 2 must then pose another pertinent query before returning the ball. ("Good! How is math club doing?")

The objective is for your child to become at ease in speaking.

Ask Your Child's Opinion.

In order to communicate, children must consider their emotions. Consult your child about daily choices. Simple topics like where to go to the library or how to spend your vacation could be discussed.

Consult your child's viewpoint on pertinent issues. "Should the other team have won?" is one example. Do you recall recent news stories? It's a good habit to use "I think" or "I feel" phrases to start talks.

Encourage Your Child to Keep A Journal.

Once they've had some time to process their thoughts, some children find it simpler to communicate with others. It could be beneficial to write about daily activities and emotions in a journal or diary. Your child may find it simpler to formulate and communicate ideas as a result of the process. When asked what has been going on, your youngster may finally feel more prepared and secure as a result of this.