

FAMILY 911- PART 3

Raising Kids That Turn Out Right”

The Sunday school teacher was carefully explaining the story of Elijah the Prophet and the false prophets of Baal. She explained how Elijah built the altar, put wood upon it, cut the steer in pieces, and laid it upon the altar. And then, Elijah commanded the people of God to fill four barrels of water and pour it over the altar. He had them do this four times. "Now," said the teacher, "can anyone in the class tell me why the Lord would have Elijah pour water over the steer on the altar?" A little girl in the back of the room started waving her hand, "I know! I know!" she said, "To make the gravy!"

The Sunday School teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt---when little Jason interrupted, "My Mummy looked back once, while she was driving," he announced triumphantly, "and she turned into a telephone pole!"

Young children are fun to teach. If you can get them to sit still long enough to get through a Bible story, they will soak it up. They may not grasp all of the details correctly, but they can certainly add interesting perspectives. The sad fact is that far too many children begin to lose interest in the Bible stories as they grow older. In fact, a large percentage of children raised in Sunday School and church, even in solid Bible teaching churches, will walk away from the faith of their parents never to return when they are old enough to make their own decisions.

This past week a little three-year-old girl was killed when she was ejected from the car she was traveling in when it collided with another car. The car seat she was sitting in had not been properly secured in the car. I'm sure the parents of this little girl never thought for one moment that they were putting their child in danger. However, their good intentions

could not protect her from the force of the collision.

Countless parents today are discouraged and frustrated because their children, whom they had brought to church as they were growing up, have decided to reject the faith. Many have chosen immoral lifestyles and seem to totally ignore the sound biblical principles they were taught as young children. What went wrong? Does God not make promises concerning our children when we raise them according to His way?

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6

This is a wonderful promise yet it is often either ignored or misunderstood. One popular interpretation is that if parents send their children to Sunday School at an early age, teach them some “religious” things such as bedtime prayers and a few hymns, send them to Christian school and maybe a Christian camp every summer that when their child grows up while they may rebel and sow their wild oats for a while, some day, maybe when they are old and gray, they will come back to God. But that is not what this passage teaches.

Others are convinced that there is no absolute promise here at all. They will point to seemingly godly parents whose children have turned out to be very ungodly. “Just because you train a child in the right way there is no guarantee that he will chose to follow that way,” is their response.

Does the Scripture promise that we can train our children in such a way that they will follow God throughout their lives? If it does then what is the correct way to teach? How can we raise our kids to turn out right?

1. CLAIM THE PROMISE

The promise of this verse involves much more than mere external actions. In fact, one of the quickest ways to turn your child from God is to live a life focused on the external while the heart (attitude) is not in it. Your children are experts on picking up your attitudes on attending church, listening to the message, reading the Bible, having a personal prayer time,

etc.

- **Train up a child**

The Hebrew term behind “train up” is derived from the palate or the roof of the mouth. The term was used to describe a rope placed in the mouth of the horse to give it direction while the rider was breaking it. It has the thought of bringing a wild spirit into submission.

It was also used to describe the action of a Hebrew midwife as she delivered a baby. Shortly after helping in the birth process, she would hold the tiny newborn in her arms, take her index finger and massage the gums, palate, and roof of the mouth, encouraging a sucking response. The term carried the idea of cultivating a sensation within the mouth and creating a thirst.

To train up a child is to give both direction while bringing him into submission and to create a desire (thirst) for the things of God.

- **In the way he should go**

This is not just referring to the ultimate goal of bringing a child into a right relationship with God. It also refers to helping a child understand his unique characteristics and how God wants to use him. Every child is a unique creation of God with his own personality, gifts and abilities. As we teach our children by leading them to follow God’s precepts, we should be helping them develop the talents and abilities that God has given them.

- **And when he is old he will not depart from it**

The word *old* here does not mean when it’s time for the retirement home. Actually the word refers to facial hair. The idea is that when a child becomes a young adult, he will already have made up his mind to not leave the path that he has been urged to follow by his godly parents.

2. SET THE STANDARD

Rather than causing your child to question your love,

discipline confirms your love. A child who lives with consistent, fair correction learns that you value him or her. Numerous tests have proven that well-loved yet justly disciplined children are healthier, and mature to be more productive, secure adults than those raised in ultra-permissive environments. Yet the idea of biblical discipline which includes corporal punishment is discounted, ridiculed, and ignored in our society today. Yet the Scripture is still true and applicable.

He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly. Proverbs 13:24

A child senses that parents care when they stand their ground and maintain established parameters. However, it is very important to understand that there is a huge distinction between abuse and discipline. There is a distinction between crushing the spirit and shaping the will.

A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken. Proverbs 15:13

Unfair overly harsh discipline can crush the spirit of a child. Comparisons to others, favoritism, or unrealistic expectations can discourage a child so much that he “loses heart.”

There is a distinction between normal childishness and willful defiance. Children will spill things, forget things, make messes. Etc. Don’t come “unglued” because your child accidentally breaks something. It is willful disobedience and defiance that must be dealt with swiftly and firmly.

While we live in an age of no absolutes, we must establish standards or absolutes in our homes. Set reasonable rules and do not allow your children to ignore them.

3. ENFORCE THE RULES

Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him. Proverbs 22:15

Obviously the Lord has corporeal punishment in mind.

Discipline here is the idea of inflicting pain in order to associate pain with wrong. The spanking communicates a firm, painful message. Because some have abused children while administering corporeal punishment, many condemn its use altogether. That makes as much sense as outlawing all driving and requiring everyone to walk wherever they want to go because some drivers drive dangerously and cause accidents.

The most effective way to discipline children is to follow God's instructions which includes spanking under certain circumstances. That does not include slapping in the face or using the fists. God has provided a perfect place on the body to administer discipline. It even comes with extra padding.

- **Foolishness**

We often think of foolishness as silliness or immaturity, but the biblical meaning is much stronger.

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt. They have done abominable works. There is none who does good. Psalm 14:1

Foolishness describes a defiance that comes from our sinful nature. Like their parents, our children are not naturally good. They are sinners. They don't have to be taught to do evil, but they must be trained to do right.

- **The rod of correction**

Although many want to interpret this figuratively, there is no reason to do so from the scriptural context. The word "rod" implies that we should use an implement when disciplining our children. For those who fear that their children may question your love if you bring pain, notice how God responds to us when we sin against Him.

For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. Hebrews 12:6

We know our heavenly Father loves us and cares for us. When we "act up" He takes us "to the wood shed." He does not let us get by with defiance.

However, with the rod there is also the verbal correction.

My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor detest His correction: For whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights. Proverbs 3:11-12

For our discipline to be effective, it must be consistent and reasonable.

4. MODEL THE PRINCIPLES

You cannot effectively teach what you do not live!

- **Develop your personal relationship with God.**
- **Be sure your life is consistent with your words.**
- **Demonstrate how you want your children to live.**

But as for me and for my house, we will serve the LORD. Joshua 24:15

About this Sermon: The above is a sermon outline prepared by Pastor Michael Switzer and was preached for the family of believers at Cornerstone Baptist Church, Middletown NY. It is published here for instructional purposes. Although it is copyrighted to protect from abuse or misquotation, it may be quoted in-part or linked freely from other websites. When using more than 33% of the text or if using in any printed format, please contact us for permission. All Bible references from the New King James Version (NKJV). Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. ©2006 Cornerstone Baptist Church