

## Responsible Parent – Child Relationships

An eight-year-old boy, Noah, was discussing parent problems with his little friend. Of course, they had a lot of complaints. Dustin was overheard grumbling, “First they teach you to talk, then they teach you to walk, and as soon as you do it, it’s ‘Sit down and shut up!’”

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Our youths love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority—they show disrespect for their elders and love to chatter in place of exercise. Children are now tyrants, not the servants of their households. They no longer rise when their elders enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up food, and tyrannize teachers.

*Socrates, c. 400 b.c.*

Ephesians 6: 1 – 4

### 1) The Importance of Responsible Parent Child relationships

- James Dobson writes: “Good citizens cannot be produced in homes where children have good reason not to respect their own parents”
- A child identifies his parents with God, whether or not the adults want that role. JAMES C. DOBSON
- We have a society out of control because we have lost all godly order in our homes.
- When God is thrown out of our homes and then God is thrown out of society we lose all perspective on righteousness and morality.
- Too often we complain about the evils of our society when we allow them in our homes – we permit our children to practise them, we allow them to watch horrific stuff on TV and play ungodly video games.
- We are all part of creating society – good or evil – by the way we relate to our children and the way we raise them.
- Proverbs 20:20 If a man curses his father or mother, his lamp will be snuffed out in pitch darkness.

### 2) What God expects of children

- Obey your parents in the Lord (Ephesians 6: 1)
  - Colossians 3: 20 tells us that it pleases the Lord when children obey their parents in everything
  - Children aren’t to obey their only when the command seems reasonable or right but in everything – even when the command is based on a bad decision.
  - The only time a child ought not to obey his parents is when he is told to do something that contravenes the Word of God. Thus the command to obey our parents in the Lord i.e. within the boundaries of the Word of God.
  - When a child does not obey his parents he undermines authority and when we allow our children to disobey us we are in fact teaching them that it is tolerable and acceptable in the home and society to undermine authority. This attitude eventually leads to anarchy – lawlessness

- The parent who does not teach his child to obey is being cruel to him. The habit of implicit obedience to parental authority is the foundation of good citizenship. More than that, it is the foundation of subjection to God's authority.

Billy Graham

- Honour your father and mother (v. 2)
  - Moses, Jesus and Paul all command us to honour our parents.
  - To honour our parents goes beyond the realm of obedience to them
  - When we honour our parents we treat them with respect even when we disagree with them.
  - It means to prize, value or revere.
  - This is not only for minors but we are to honour our parents throughout life.
  - The command does not tell us that we are at liberty to dishonour them when we are adults.
  - If we are waiting for a time to stop honouring them then we have never honoured them in the first place because honour them is primarily an attitude.
  - Honouring them does not want to bring shame on them in the way we live our lives
  - Prov. 10: 1 A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother.

### 3) Responsible Parenthood

- Do not exasperate your children
  - Do not provoke your children to anger (NRSV)
  - We can exasperate our children in many ways. Some are:
    - Being a hypocrite – telling them to do something that we won't do or telling them to stop doing something that we do.
    - Not understanding them
    - Not being available for them when they need you.
    - Parents can remove the exasperating effect of their discipline by avoiding nagging, labelling, criticizing, or dominating. Don't goad your children into resenting you. (Life Application Bible Commentary)
- Bring them up
  - This means "to rear to maturity"
  - A responsible parent doesn't leave his children to make their own way to maturity but to "take them by the hand and lead them in the way of the Master" (The Message).
  - When we teach a child to ride a bicycle we don't just tell them to go out and do it. We walk alongside the bicycle to be there to catch him if he falls and pick him up if he does fall. As he improves we slowly keep our distance. When he knows how to ride properly we tell him to go out and ride his bicycle. Such is the process of rearing them to maturity.
  - Our adult children can be exasperated when they are still treated as children. They need to be treated as adults. There needs to be a constant change in relationship with our children.

- Many children are afraid to go to their parents for counsel. Parents many times treat children as children when they often need to be talked to like grown-ups. BILLY GRAHAM

- Training

- By training we mean discipline
- Proverbs 22:6 Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.
- We often have the wrong concept of discipline as we think that it means punishment.
- Rather it is the instilling of a disciplined lifestyle by forming good habits and removing bad habits and attitudes from the child.
- Hebrews 12: 8 – 11 If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. <sup>9</sup> Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! <sup>10</sup> Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. <sup>11</sup> No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.
- Proverbs 29:17 Discipline your son, and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul.
- Proverbs 13:18 He who ignores discipline comes to poverty and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honored.
- Proverbs 13:24 He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.
- Better a little chiding than a great deal of heartbreak.

William Shakespeare

- Instructing in the Lord

- Deut 4:9 Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them
- Parents are responsible to teach their children the ways of the Lord.
- We cannot expect the church or Sunday School to take over that responsibility from us. They may help the parents but the responsibility lies with the parents.
- Parents have little time for children and a great vacuum has developed, and into that vacuum is going to move some kind of ideology.

Billy Graham

You don't need to be right all the time. Your child wants a man for a father, not a formula. He wants real parents, real people, capable of making mistakes without moping about it.

C. D. WILLIAMS