

Child Rearing

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Introduction.

- A. Socrates wondered how cults could be so interested in others yet uninterested in their own children.
- B. The word of God never encourages indifference toward children.
 - 1. The Bible promises to protect children if they are trained up in the way they should go. (Proverbs 22:6)
 - 2. This truth has not been rescinded yet it is conditioned on a command.
 - 3. We must train up the child in the way he should go and God will keep his promise.
 - 4. What does it mean to train up a child in the way he should go?
 - 5. Once I was speaking on child rearing and a man approached me in bitterness, asking me what age my children were. He thought they would rebel as they entered the teenage years. Yet my children have not rebelled because the word of God is true.

I. What does it mean to train up a child in the way he should go?

A. First it means to lead that child to faith in Christ.

- 1. To fail here is to fail completely.
- 2. Walking in the way a child should go is essential because living the Christian life is impossible for an unregenerate person.
- 3. Timothy was taught the Scriptures from his early years. (2 Timothy 3:13)
- 4. A determinative clue of reproduction is that genuine faith of parents is often passed on to children. (2 Timothy 1:5)
 - a. A prominent leader made the unfortunate statement of preferring to work with people who were not raised in Christian homes than people raised in Christian homes.

1. I think he meant to say that sometimes Christian parents teach rather poorly and that he would rather start from scratch than to clean up someone's mess.

2. The truth is, however, many strong leaders in the church have come from Christian homes.

b. Young people infected by genuine Christianity, however, are better prepared to minister than converts who have not had the privilege of a Christian home.

c. Are we immunizing our children from genuine Christianity or are we infecting them with the real thing?

d. The author of *Early Christians of the Twentieth Century* said it is easier to vaccinate men with mild Christianity than to infect them with the real thing.

e. Are you immunizing your Children against real Christianity, or are you infecting them with the real thing?

5. “Train up” is used four times in the OT and in each of the other three uses it means to dedicate, as in a house or temple.

a. It means to set apart for Godly purposes.

b. It is a picture of what a parent should do with children.

B. Second, train up means to be a consistent example to the child.

1. This is a most difficult but most effective way to communicate.

2. If teaching would make my children smart they would be brilliant.

3. Training means more than telling; it is living out the truth.

4. Sadly, Christianity is often defined more by what we don't do than what we do.

5. What is distinctively different about your home?

a. Not smoking or drinking doesn't cut it.

b. Many moral people are hell bound.

c. The cemetery is full of people that don't do bad things.

d. Christianity is more about what we do in being like Christ.

e. If a parent is trying to teach a child to memorize Scripture and he is not truthful the child picks up on this and sees that Christianity is hypocritical.

6. “To train up” comes from a Hebrew root form that describes a Hebrew midwife plunging a finger into dates or olive oil and rubbing it in the mouth of a child to create a desire for thirst.

a. Are you creating a desire for God in your children?

- b. How salty are you in terms of communicating with your children?
- c. Parents need to be diligent so their progress can be manifest to all. (1 Timothy 4:15)
- d. I pray this conference will help you to manifest your love for God to all.
- e. If your children see a real change in you they will never recover from the experience.
- f. Taking notes is good but notes don't change lives.
- g. Only by living out the Christian life in the power of the Spirit can you have solid evidence to give to your children that Christ is real.

C. Third, train up means providing a happy atmosphere in which to live.

1. Read Proverbs through often as the message of a man to his son.
2. Proverbs is a training manual to help a son live pleasing to God.
3. The problem of Christian homes today is that we are suffering from a fog of mortalism in which we are hopelessly uptight and guilty.
4. The Christian experience is to be enjoyed, not endured.
5. Some Christians look as though they were weaned on a pickle.
6. Some students ask for advice, wondering if something is the will of God because they enjoy it; if it were difficult they would be convinced it's God's will.
7. Obeying God is exciting.
8. I pray God will instruct you by his Spirit to be liberated in him rather than to be in chains of the expectations of man.
9. I know of a peach farming family that has several well adjusted children that are in ministry because the home is well balanced and fun.
 - a. I asked one of the young men what they remember most about home.
 - b. He remembered his father's prayer life and his laughter.
 - c. This is an invincible combination.
 - d. What will your children remember you for?
 1. The dad for his golf swing?

2. The mom for her mop?

D. Fourth, training up a child is spending time with them.

1. The greatest need of children is for parents to be with them.
2. I went with a juvenile officer once to pick up a boy of a wealthy man.
 - a. The man lamented that he had given the boy everything.
 - b. The officer said the boy needed a parent.
3. Nothing substitutes for personal time spent with a child.

E. Fifth, train up means to provide positive reasons for your conviction.

1. A girl planned to go to the mission field after nursing school.
2. She never got to the field and never married.
3. I asked her what happened, and she told me that her training was all second hand as her mother never let her participate in the real world.
4. Are we giving our children Christian standards or merely the standards of some Christians?
5. Christian standards are based on the word of God and must become the personal property of each person.
6. Campuses today have no authority in the classroom.
 - a. Teachers must not only know something but be someone.
 - b. Students ask not only what do you know but who are you?
7. Studying at Wheaton I pastored a church and began visiting some people.
 - a. They were upset that kids were playing ball on the front lawn instead of the back lawn on Sunday.
 - b. It's sloppy thinking.
8. A Stanford University researcher found that learning from direct experience can also come about by observation of others' behavior and the consequences.
 - a. We can communicate a great deal to our children by providing adequate models for them.
 - b. We need to be positive role models.

F. Sixth, training up a child means trusting the Spirit of God to do what only he can do.

1. We trust Christ for salvation but we struggle trusting him for 24 hours with our children.

2. To train is to trust.

3. Jesus trusted God in the training of his disciples.

a. He seemed to be interested in the development of their faith.

b. We can learn theology but not learn to trust God.

c. My primary objective for my students is the development of their faith.

1. A student going out to share the Gospel asked me to pray they wouldn't go for his throat.

2. I told him I'm praying they go for his juggler.

3. God answered my prayer and it changed his life.

4. They laughed him out of the room and he began learning to trust God.

5. My daughter had a car accident and went through the windshield. We are thankful that God is sovereign and knows how to teach her when we don't.

6. Never back away from difficult experiences because this is where God will teach you and your child how to trust him.

4. I don't have all the answers to how to train up a child.

a. I am convinced, however, that we communicate through the reality of Jesus Christ in our lives.

b. My children are not impressed that I came here today to talk to Navigator staff on childrearing.

c. One evening I was working late and needed to speak at a conference that night. Back home my boy's bike tire went flat and I realized that if I didn't fix it immediately I wouldn't get to it. So I fixed it and arrived late for the conference. The MC didn't like that but I knew it was more important for me to fix my kid's tire than to eat the meal.

1. Later I asked my boy if he loves me.

2. He said yes but couldn't say why.

3. Later he told me he loves me because I play ball with him and that I fixed his bike tire.

4. My children are not impressed by my knowledge; they are impressed with the reality of Jesus Christ in my life.

II. Concluding prayer

Father we pray that we are coming to a beginning of a new departure in our home lives. We've been talking about family but our greatest need is that you do something in us. Each of us needs you and believes you have yet to say some things to us and we are listening. Give us grace to obey you in whatever you say. As we return to our families we pray that an evident work of God will be seen in our homes, our businesses, and in our friendships. Brand us by your Spirit so we are never the same again. I thank you for the Navigators who are committed to a ministry of spiritual reproduction and servanthood. We pray rich blessings on this work and on each staff member. Supply their needs and give this movement a sharper cutting edge for the glory of God. We ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ.