

the Chalkboard

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Training Children

One of the most frightening times in my life was after the birth of my first child. While I was at the hospital, I had a steady supply of helping hands from family, friends, nurses, and doctors. All of these individuals gave me helpful advice. But the day I came home with my 8 lbs. 2 oz. baby boy, I was terrified. My husband returned to work and I was alone. What was I supposed to do with this little bundle of joy? On that day, I felt the true responsibility of training children. For at that moment, my son could not roll over, crawl, walk, talk, or feed himself. I was responsible for teaching him everything. With this in mind, I took it upon myself to read multiple how-to books on child care. I could humor you with many personal success stories in parenting. The only problem is that I would also have to share as many failures. However, through the years of rearing my four children, I have come to realize the most important book that I have relied upon is the Bible. It contains the advice I need to become a better parent yet also provides the instructions for leading my children in the way of Truth.

In Deuteronomy 6:5-7, Moses admonished the Israelites to keep God's commands in their hearts. He instructed them to not only have "head knowledge" but a "heart experience" with God. As a parent and teacher, I cannot show the children in my care how to love God and follow His Word unless I live it myself. God's Word is not to become just a set of rules to keep but to be our guide for everyday living. As a direct outcome, common activities such as resting, rising, and walking will become a means for talking to my children about God.

The Israelites lived among people groups who did not worship the one true and living God. These heathen nations worshipped idols and even sacrificed their children to their gods. The Lord warned the Israelites not to give their children to idols. God taught His people, saying, "Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the Lord your God. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do

them: I am the Lord which sanctify you" (Leviticus 20:7-8). As God's people, we are called to separate ourselves from this world, to obey His commands, and to instruct each future generation in the ways of the Lord. The world offers an easier road for our children to travel. This path is wide and many will follow it to their own destruction (Matthew 7:13). But Jesus taught a better way of living. He said, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life" (v. 14). He further explained, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

In our families and churches, there are newborn babes who need "the sincere milk of the word" that they "may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2). Jesus said to make disciples by "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20). As parents and teachers, do not simply hint at the truth. Instead, make the pathway plain. Teach children the Word so directly that there is no mistake which path they are on. Social and political groups perpetuate their agendas by training youth and indoctrinating them in their practices. With sincere hearts, we must take up the responsibility to train children and to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

When children grow into adulthood, they will prove everything they have been taught. Proverbs 22:6 encourages me that if I do my part in training my children in the right path then I can trust that they will choose to follow in it on their own. In Proverbs 4:11-13, the writer instructs his son by saying, "I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble. Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life." Do not let another day slip through your fingers. There is no time to waste for "now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). This is the time to train your children in the way of the Lord.

Cheryl H. McDonald, International Children's Ministries Director

P. O. Box 2398

Cleveland, TN 37320

423-476-3337

childrensministries@zionassemblychurchofgod.com

