

Biblical Childrearing

The Nurture of the Lord

September 15, 1996

- Children are to be taught *what* to believe.
 - Childrearing has eternal consequences
 - There is a season for childrearing
 - Both faithful and faithless childrearing are fruitful
 - Principles and methods are not the same thing
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- **Introduction**

Over the next few weeks, we will look in depth into the principles and practice of Biblical discipline of our children. Before we do, I would like to consider one half of the command we have to bring our children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. As we discussed last week, God has made us male and female and called us to be godly men and women. This message will be directed differently to the men and to the women but the bulk of the Scriptures will address commands specifically to the fathers. In short, I would encourage the mothers to do less of the cherishing and nurturing of our children and I would encourage the fathers to do much more.

- **Ephesians 6:4**

⁴ And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. NKJV

As we have learned before, the Scriptures give instruction where instruction is necessary. Paul warns here about fathers discouraging or exasperating their children because this is a temptation for fathers and a weakness for children. The word for training is frequently translated nurture in the Scriptures and this is an excellent word because it carries with it more than just instruction. It includes the concept of nourishment, cherishing and provision. In a similar way, husbands are told to cherish their wives as they would their own body, so too fathers are told to nurture their children.

- **Outline**
- **All training, discipline and encouragement are manifestations of our love of our children.**

1 Thessalonians 2:10-12

¹⁰ You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe;¹¹ as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children,¹² that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. NKJV

- Here Paul presumes a truth in his instruction; fathers comfort, exhort and charge their children. All of these things are the actions that demonstrate love for our children. It is not enough to simply say that we love our children in our hearts or "of course they know how I feel about them...". Our love for our children must be evident in the way we treat them. Love has feet and is made evident by our actions.
- Notice that in this example, fathers are comforters. Too frequently we defer providing comfort to our wives and forget that there are times when tender affectionate interaction is necessary. Comfort is not a formless, softness but it provides assurance when insecure, it provides safety when scared and clarity when confused. Fathers should strive to have their children long to be in their arms.

- **We must seek to cultivate fellowship with our children:**

1 John 1:5-7

⁵ This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.⁶ If we

say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.⁷ But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. NKJV

- When we are in sin, it becomes impossible to come before the Lord and offer praise or prayer. The sin creates a barrier to our fellowship with Him and we can often see this in our Christian friends; when Christians are in sin, fellowship with the Father is broken and we cannot have fellowship with them. This is a very important condition to watch for in our children as well. If there is sin that has gone uncorrected, you will find that the children are distant and more likely to be irritating and they are really desirous of a means to put things right.
- One very crucial application here is that when a child is in need of discipline, one aspect of this condition that should devastate the child is the lack of fellowship. The child should be able to sense that things are not right with mom and dad. It should feel like an uncomfortable situation that is longing to be resolved. As we will consider in greater detail next week, after the discipline is administered, we must seek to demonstrate that fellowship is restored. By doing this we are teaching our children how our Father in heaven deals with us and how we confess and repent of sin.
- **Our loving Father remembers our frame.**

Psalm 103:13-14

¹³ As a father pities his children, So the Lord pities those who fear Him. ¹⁴ For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. NKJV

- Another means by which we demonstrate our love for our children is for us to understand the difference between immaturity and folly. As parents (especially fathers) we should be very familiar with the abilities and maturity level of our children. For example, learning how to ride a bike requires a particular physical development that comes at different times for different children. This example seems very obvious. Another example might be knowing when a child is able to understand an instruction like "come here, please" or making wise decisions. With these things we must by faith measure maturity of the child and reward or discipline accordingly. We should reward advances in maturity and guard against disciplining for immaturity. However, immature behavior should be disciplined when it is not appropriate for the actual maturity of your children. This requires that we know our children's frame.
- **We declare the legitimacy of our children through our discipline:**

Hebrews 12:3-6

³ For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.⁴ You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.⁵ And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;⁶ For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." NKJV

- For the next two weeks we will look in detail at the instruction that the Bible gives us for correcting and disciplining our children. As we prepare for that instruction we must keep in mind the principles with which we started this series as well as remembering that we will declare our hatred for our children by withholding correction from them. Just as our Father in heaven demonstrates His love for us, one manifestation of our love for our children is the manner in which we discipline them.