

The Marvelous Institution of Marriage, Part 5

Foundations of Child Rearing

May 28, 1995

It may seem somewhat odd that we are studying the rearing of children in the context of marriage. As we saw in the first sermon on the foundations of marriage we learned that one of the primary purposes that God had in creating marriage was the rendering unto him of godly children. This is something that God expects of parents. Once we had addressed the responsibilities of the more primary relationship between husband and wife we are now able to move on to the biblical requirements for parents.

When we look around us at our public life, we see that there has been a complete attempt to eliminate God from everything. This is only possible because we have *first* removed God from our families. If we are to see changes in our political leaders, we must first understand what God expects of us and then teach these things to our children.

It is important that we develop and understand these foundational theologies of child rearing. The reason is that if we don't others will be taught to us.

- **As with all things, we either have Godly thoughts or ungodly thoughts.**

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. (NKJV)

- Here, Paul tells us that there are either thoughts that have brought captive to the obedience of Christ or they have not. We can either determine what truth is by what we feel or prefer, or we can be instructed by God as to what truth is. Either we will take our instruction from Him or we will be instructed by the world. Therefore it is imperative that we evaluate our conceptions and misconceptions about child rearing and compare them to the standard of scripture.

- **Children are always given as a blessing.**

Psalms 127:3-5

3 Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward. 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth. 5 Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; They shall not be ashamed, But shall speak with their enemies in the gate. (NKJV)

- Although we may have an idea about how children are created, we must not forget that fruitfulness is a splendid blessing. God fearfully and wonderfully makes all children. Parents who are faithfully bringing their children up will be blessed by their children. However, those disobedient parents who have rejected what God expects of them will be shamed by their disobedient children.

- Behavior of parents has an impact on their children.

Exodus 20:4-6

4 You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. (NKJV)

- As we see from the verse in Exodus, parents have a tremendous impact on the children and successive generations. God has built the world in such a way that parents will have an impact—both good and bad. But take careful note of this verse. We tend to focus on the warning about visiting sins to the third and fourth generations. Really this verse is a promise of tremendous grace to thousands of generations of the faithful.

- Fathers are to teach their children.

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)

- When children are given to us, God entrusts us with the responsibility of teaching and training them. The parents are clearly responsible for instruction. The reality is that even when you aren't necessarily teaching them didactically, you are in fact teaching them. In addition, when you stop teaching, the world doesn't. The world would love to fully indoctrinate your children and they do so very well. Therefore, you are always teaching your children even when you are abdicating your responsibility.

- Parents must not think that someone else can rear their children.

John 10:11-16

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 12 "But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13 "The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. 14 "I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. 15 "As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. 16 "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd. (NKJV)

- Although this verse does not deal with rearing children, the principle can be applied. The notion that someone else could or should rear your children is one that should not be believed by parents. No one else cares about your children the way you do, even if they are close friends or family. It is your responsibility and no one else's. Some people think that daycare is not only a better place to be when there are bad parents, they think that daycare is as good as a good parents.

- Children are to be taught what to believe.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! 5 "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

6 And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8 "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (NKJV)

- Unfortunately, the Church has bought the lie of the world that says that all points of view are valid. It seems today that because someone can formulate a thought in their head that each thought has merit and validity. This is devastating when parents buy into the lie that they must teach all points of view as valid and that if they don't they aren't respecting the individuality of their child. This is absolute foolishness. The Scriptures not only say that you are to teach your children, you are to teach them how and what to think. "But wait," you will say, "aren't we brainwashing our children?" Absolutely. We are washing their brains with the Word of God not the humanistic rot that the world tries to dish out to us.
- **We must teach them that we love God by obeying Him joyfully.**

1 John 5:1-4

1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. 4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith. (NKJV)

- Here we have a direct command that we are told to teach our children to love God. But the question remains, what is love for God? We show our love for God when we obey His commands. Our love is made manifest by our actions. Through our actions, our love for God is substantiated. In addition, love for God, means that His commands are never burdensome. Even if difficult, it is a privilege and a blessing to obey God. We must teach our children not only to conform or comply on the outside, we must teach them to love virtue and to obey joyfully.