

Training Children

- I. At the outset, it needs to be understood that training *precedes* teaching. Before a child develops critical language and reasoning skills, training should be well underway.
- A. train: III. 5. To treat or manipulate so as to bring to the proper or desired form; *spec.* in Gardening, to manage (a plant or a branch) so as to cause it to grow in some desired form or direction... 6. To subject to discipline and instruction for the purpose of forming character and developing the powers of, or of making proficient in some occupation...
1. O.E.D. cites **PRO 22:6** as an example of this definition.
 2. Training a sapling is wiser than trying to train a seventeen-year-old oak tree. Don't let the season of hope slip by. **PRO 19:18.**
 3. Training is *manipulating*. The parent is supposed to be the manipulator. While being sensitive to a child's needs and hurts, beware that you are not being manipulated.
 4. Don't wait until your child can intelligently dialogue and reason before you begin to train that child in acceptable behavior by positive and negative enforcement. **PRO 13:24.**
 - a. chasten: *trans.* To inflict disciplinary or corrective punishment on; to visit with affliction for the purpose of moral improvement; to correct, discipline, chastise.
 - b. betimes: At an early time, period, or season; early in the year; early in life.
 - c. Physical chastening with the rod is not the only method of corrective punishment but it is effective, necessary and godly. God Himself said He would chasten His own Son with the rod if He committed iniquity. **2SAM 7:14.**
 - d. Don't try to be wiser and holier than God.
- B. Training children is inevitable. You will train your children one way or the other to think their will is absolute or governed. You will train them by your good example or your poor example. You will train them in preparation for real life, or for a fantasy life of self-centeredness, consequence-free decisions and benefits without merit.
- C. Positively reward good behavior, never bad behavior, since you will strengthen whatever you feed. **1PE 2:13-14.**
- II. Children are to be raised by parents in trust for God Who desires a godly seed. **MAL 2:15; PSA 144:11-12.**
- A. Godliness is profitable in all things in this life (**1TI 4:8**), including childhood development.
- B. It teaches charity and boundaries by "love thy neighbour as thyself" (**GAL 5:14 c/w ROM 13:10**) and so maximizes positive human relations.
- C. Remember that you are not only preparing a child to engage the world, you are preparing a child for an encounter with God through Jesus Christ, since all judgment is in His hands. **JOH 5:22-23; ACT 17:31; 2CO 5:10.**
- III. The proper training of children is necessary owing to their nature. **PRO 22:15.**
- A. Do not expect a child to develop properly on its own. **PRO 17:25; 29:15.**
- B. Children are like old photo film negatives that need to be developed. They will not attain to their proper image without someone properly processing them.
- C. You don't need to train children to become fools since they are pre-programmed to folly but bad training will expedite that.
- D. Personality differences in children will make training specialized but be consistent.

- IV. Both parents are responsible to train the child properly. **PRO 22:6 c/w PRO 1:8; EPH 6:1.**
- A. Parents should present a united front in this warfare. Children cannot please God and obey their *parents* in the Lord (**EPH 6:1**) when the parents have opposing directives.
 - B. Contradictions between parents confuse a child and he will quickly learn to pit one parent against another and exploit the situation to his own advantage.
 - C. The primary responsibility and leadership role belongs to the father.
DEUT 6:6-7; ISA 38:19; EPH 6:4.
 - 1. This is a great burden and undertaking since it requires positive leadership often in spite of personal weakness and in the face of opposition from the world and sometimes within the household.
 - 2. An effective father needs to think maturely and to discipline himself: making duty dominant over self-interests.
- V. **PRO 22:6** brings up some searching issues about training.
- A. Again, parents WILL train their children one way or another.
 - 1. Parents need to honestly evaluate what they are training children to become.
 - 2. Are they training children to be self-willed, disrespectful, unrestrained, shiftless, manipulative, undisciplined, complaining, irresponsible, covetous, entitlement-minded burdens who are ill-prepared for the real world or for God?
 - 3. Or, are they training children for God to be respectful, submissive, honorable, self-restrained, disciplined, productive members of society who have learned early at home that there are reasonable expectations and boundaries that must be respected?
 - 4. The latter is *the way that they should go* because it is what God expects of people in general.
 - B. *The way a child should go* is not determined by popular opinion, methinks, feelings, unbiblical wisdom nor any other substitute for Scripture's commandments, precepts and principles. **PSA 119:128.**
 - 1. A faithful pastor's teaching and example from Scripture should be heeded.
HEB 13:17; 1TI 4:12.
 - 2. A faithful pastor already met God's test for successful parenting. **1TI 3:4-5.**
 - C. Who is training whom? I have seen many cases where the children are doing the training, manipulating parents who are afraid they will lose the child's love or by wearing out a parent to the point of the parent's submission to the child's whims.
 - 1. Loving parents have two things working in their favor relative to their child's love: the natural bond between parent and child, and the added incentive that comes from sensing tender care and security.
 - 2. Children who have to be chastened also are concerned about losing their parents' love for them. They long for restoration and assurance post-chastening.
 - D. The successful training of children is very dependent upon the parents' presuppositions about their children.
 - 1. Here is an "A - Z" list of unhealthy presuppositions about children.
 - a. Children will develop well in a chaotic, disorderly home.
 - b. Children will naturally develop good character without guidance.
 - c. Children's development is thwarted by imposed boundaries and limitations.
 - d. Children's development is not thwarted by being smothered with stuff.
 - e. Children's psyches will be irreparably damaged by "No!" and spankings.
 - f. Children's psyches are so fragile that any parental error could ruin them.
 - g. Children need to be always sheltered from discomfort or disappointment.

- h. Children do not need attention and affection, only rules and orders.
- i. Children are unwanted obstacles to personal goals and desires.
- j. Children are the property of the State to be molded to its preferences.
- k. Children do not need to respect the State in its lawful authority.
- l. Children won't notice or be affected by bad parental examples.
- m. Children are all born with immutable personalities which cannot be molded.
- n. Children will not be adversely affected by ungodly entertainment.
- o. Children will naturally make good choices about food, clothes and pleasure.
- p. Children will naturally make good choices about friends.
- q. Children are pets to be pampered.
- r. Children must be harshly disciplined for every infraction.
- s. Children always need negative reinforcement.
- t. Children always need positive reinforcement.
- u. Children do not need praise or, conversely, need constant praise.
- v. Children don't need dad around.
- w. Children's interests are foremost in the home.
- x. Children's interests should be given no consideration in the home.
- y. Children should be spared doctrinal teaching and preaching.
- z. Children don't need God, His knowledge, His fear, His Bible or His church.
- 2. None of the above presuppositions accord with Scripture. It is imperative that a Biblical presuppositional view of children be cultivated, as well as a Biblical model of parenting.

VI. By virtue of the principle of **PRO 22:6**, parents are to shape the lives of their children.

A. Much of a child's personality and value system is molded before the age of nine, which emphasizes the importance of getting things started early on the right track.

- 1. A good example of early training is in the area of child discipline by chastening.
PRO 13:24.
- 2. betimes: At an early time, period, or season; early in the year; early in life.
- 3. Do not delude yourselves into thinking that you can verbally train very little children or reason them out of bad or dangerous behavior. That is contrary to common sense and Scripture which declares little children void of discernment.
ISA 7:16.
 - a. Associating pain with dangerous behavior or misbehavior is the best way to help them know what is wrong.
 - b. Repeat the word “no” during the punishment which reinforces to the child what that word means.
 - c. Over time, verbal rebuke can then be effective in warning about a wrong or a danger.
 - d. The association of an emphatic “No!” with painful consequence may well be the salvation of a child from an imminent danger when you cannot grab him.
- 4. Adult screaming and frustration are bad substitutes for prompt, measured chastening by the rod beginning early in life.
 - a. Screaming and frustration produce a disrespect in the mind of the child because he perceives your inability to control him or yourself.
 - b. Children will test your leadership to see if it is worthy of respect.
 - c. Children respect strength and courage as is evident in the characters they select as heroes.
 - d. Children will test to see if the rules hold.

- e. Children feel more secure in an environment where the rights of others and their rights are protected.
 - 4. Parents who do not heed this will one day regret it. Late starters have their work cut out for them but "...be wise in thy latter end" (**PRO 19:20**). Don't do nothing.
- B. Parents are to create an atmosphere conducive to children having good values and behavior.
 - 1. This creation of this atmosphere must begin at home.
 - a. Children cannot be expected to have good values in venues outside of the home if they have not been trained to do so in the home.
 - b. Public behavior usually exposes what has been going on in the home.
 - c. Example: Scripture does not specifically say, "Children shall not be defined by screaming at the top of their lungs when they feel like it indoors." But is permitting screaming in your home training a child in the way in which he should go? **PRO 17:1; 1TH 4:11; 2TH 3:12; 1PE 3:4**.
 - d. Hint: Teach children the difference between indoor and outdoor behavior.
 - 2. Let the prevailing tone of family life be that of nurturing, cherishing love which leaves no doubt in a child's mind that parents have the child's best interests at heart. **1TH 2:7-8**.
 - 3. Human development and performance is best where faith, hope and love are the bywords, not unbelief, morbid fear, hatred or hopelessness. **1CO 13:13 c/w 1JO 4:18**.
 - 4. Sometimes love will be tough and not be perceived for what it is. **PSA 141:5 c/w 2CO 2:4**.
 - 5. "As a child I remember asking my father questions like 'why won't you let me do things that other kids do ... why are you so hard on me ... so strict ... why do you *always* say **no**?' My father's response – 'If I didn't care about you, I wouldn't say **no** and I would allow you to do anything you wanted. Don't worry about me saying **no**, start worrying when I quit saying **no**, stop **disciplining** you, and start allowing you to do anything you want to do, because that means I no longer care about you and no longer love you.'"

(Bro. Shane Martin, *Letter to Children of Christian Parents*, 8-19-09)

VII. Consider how critical home life is to the proper training of children.

- A. Family is the first form of society and government to which children are normally exposed.
- B. Parents are the first educators of children. What is or is not learned in the home has great implications for a child's development and adult life.
 - 1. Home is where a child should first learn of God, His love, His will.
 - 2. Home is where a child should first learn language skills.
 - 3. Home is where a child should first learn basic health and hygiene.
 - 4. Home is where a child should first learn of submission to authority: by the example his parents set and by the boundaries his parents impose upon him. God Himself in the incarnation was subject to His earthly parents. **LUK 2:51**.
 - 5. Home is where a child should first learn that his will is not preeminent.
 - 6. Home is where a child should first learn of discipline, i.e., the need to restrict and focus ambition.
 - 7. Home is where a child should first learn of the painful consequences of lawbreaking.
 - 8. Home is where a child should first learn responsibility: being responsible for assigned tasks and accepting responsibility for incompleteness and disobedience.

9. Home is where a child should first learn cooperation and social skills.
 10. Home is where a child should first learn of nurturing and giving.
 11. Home is where a child should first learn economics.
 12. Home is where a child should first learn dietary nutrition.
 13. Home is where a child should first learn about physical exercise.
 14. Home is where a child should first learn about sex (from parents, not the television or internet).
 15. Home is where a child should first learn of work and merit-based reward.
 16. Home is where a child will first learn to prioritize. But what?
 17. Home is where a child WILL learn. The question is "What?"
- C. *Piety* (habitual reverence to God, devotion to religious duties; faithfulness to the duties owed to parents and relatives) begins at home (**1TI 5:4**). Parents must train by example and command the value of Scripture, true religion and family honor.
- D. *Provision* begins at home (**1TI 5:8**). Parents must train by example and command a work ethic that prioritizes family need over self-indulgence, sloth or unrighteous claims by others on the fruits of one's labor.
- E. Abraham is the prototypical man of faith. **ROM 4:3**.
1. He was singled out for blessing because of faithfulness in family matters, including the *commanding of children*. **GEN 18:19**.
 2. By contrast, his nephew, Lot, was a terrible example of a parent. **2PE 2:6-8 c/w GEN 13:8-13; 19:8, 12-14, 30-36**.
 3. The difference between Abraham and Lot (who were both children of God) is the God-blessed life v. the God-blasted life. Don't be a Lot.
- F. Many personal and societal ills can be traced back to some form of dysfunction in the home: spousal abuse, child abuse, self-indulgent parents, absentee fathers, disconnected fathers or mothers, lack of natural affection, unsubmitive wives, sexual impurity in a parent, rejection of God and religion, lack of child restraint, lack of instilled respect and reverence for authority, etc.
1. Research and experience show that sodomy, lesbianism and dysphoric tendencies can develop as a backlash to poor parental role models.
 2. Child abuse can be the result of the lack of timely, measured discipline of children which sets up powder-keg reactions from a parent when children are out of control.
 3. Lack of respect for leadership or submission to authority in public arenas (school, workplace, before the law) starts with the lack of the same in the home.
 4. Lack of self-discipline in adult life is often the continuation of a behavior developed and tolerated in the home.
 5. Unrestrained behavior in public can be because of the same in the home.
 6. Healthy family life = healthy public life and healthy adult life.
- G. A married couple's relationship will teach either fidelity or futility to children.
1. If Dad and Mom can be faithful to God and each other in how they relate, the prospect of positive interaction with others is seen as an attainable goal by children.
 2. If Dad and Mom just can't seem to get along and home life is one of dark clouds and acrimony, positive interaction with others may seem unattainable to children.
- H. Consider Eli and David.
1. Eli was God's priest to Israel. But Eli did not restrain his own appetites, nor did he restrain his sons which corrupted the priesthood. **1SAM 2:24; 3:13; 4:18**.
 2. David was a good king. But David's lack of Vitamin "N" (No!) bred trouble in his children and trouble for Israel. **1KI 1:6**.
- I. Against the over-permissiveness of Eli and David is the parent who insists on absolute

rigidity without consideration to a child's basic need to be heard out or allowed to do something which may not be profitable but not injurious.

1. Parents should not provoke children to wrath by inconsiderate mastery. **EPH 6:4.**
2. **EPH 6:4** contrasts provoking children to wrath and bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.
 - a. The nurture and admonition of the Lord will of necessity show both the goodness and the severity of God. **ROM 11:22.**
 - b. A healthy, balanced knowledge of God's dealings with His own children is valuable to training a child. God is love (**1JO 4:16**) and that love includes rebuke and chastening. **REV 3:19.**
3. provoke: To incite or urge (a person or animal) to some act or to do something; to stimulate to action; to excite, rouse, stir up, spur on.
4. nurture: Breeding, upbringing, training, education (received or possessed by one).
 - b. Moral training or discipline. [O.E.D. cites **EPH 6:4** here].
5. admonition: The action of admonishing (putting in mind of duties); authoritative counsel; warning, implied reproof.
6. Common sense tells you that children who are tyrannically beaten into compliance or are as demeaned as Jonathan was by Saul are likely going to react defensively, angrily. **1SAM 20:30-34.**
 - a. Such parenting may be the sin of "Without natural affection..." (**2TI 3:3**).
 - b. God's children are precious to Him. **ISA 43:4; MAL 3:17.**
 - c. Parents should *cherish* (hold dear, treat with tenderness and affection) their children. **1TH 2:7-8.**
7. Parents may provoke their children to wrath by *not* bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. A child learns from the school of hard knocks the realities his parents should have taught him and ends up bitter and hateful.
8. Parents may provoke their children to wrath by being not themselves regulated by the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and this breeds frustrated anger. NOTE: children will note, inventory and be ready to chamber every bit of "double-standard" ammunition you provide them.
9. For some children, *bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord* is the very thing that provokes them to wrath, not because the model is wrong but rather the child thinks he is God Whose will is sovereign.
 - a. Do not fall for this form of idolatry, and administer the antidote early. **PRO 13:24.**
 - b. Per **MAL 3:17**, sparing is for *obedient* children, not defiant ones.
 - c. Further, "...let not thy soul spare for his crying" (**PRO 19:18**).
 - d. For the sake of our salvation, God did not spare His only begotten Son, and even made Him to learn obedience by the things He suffered. **ROM 8:32; HEB 5:8.**
 - e. Beware of the error of results-directed reasoning. **NUM 20:7-12.**
 - (1) Parents may reject Scripture's commands and end up with a compliant child. But this is like betting you can make it through a minefield without following a detailed map of where the mines are.
 - (2) If results determine the method then electro-shock therapy, drugs or brain surgery might be proper ways to produce a compliant child.
- J. Remember, you will train your children one way or another. But will you train them in the way they *should* go, as **PRO 22:6** commands?
 1. For example, consider training a small child not to touch something.

- a. You can keep it within his reach and train him not to touch it by punishing him if he touches it.
 - (1) This teaches him to obey the command not to touch.
 - (2) This teaches him to restrain himself even in the presence of a forbidden object that is accessible.
 - (3) This prepares him for the real world, where things are well within the reach of little children. Likewise it prepares the child for adult life where actions have consequences.
- b. You can put it beyond his reach.
 - (1) This teaches him that is off-limits only if it is out of reach.
 - (2) This does not teach him to respect your command not to touch.
 - (3) This does not prepare him for the real world, where things are well within the reach of little children. Likewise, it does not prepare the child for adult life where actions have consequences.
2. Consider how you are training when you allow a child to get his way by persistent begging and whining.
 - a. Tolerating whining is training a child in conduct which God despises.
 - (1) whine: “To utter a low somewhat shrill protracted sound or cry, usually expressive of pain or distress; to cry in a subdued plaintive tone...2. To utter complaints in a low querulous tone; to complain in a feeble, mean, or undignified way.”
 - (2) murmur: “To make, produce, or emit a low continuous sound... 2. To complain or repine in low muttered tones; to give vent to an inarticulate discontent, to grumble.”
 - (3) See **1CO 10:10; PHIL 2:14; JUDE 1:16.**
 - b. You are training the child that persistent begging and whining pay off. By contrast, you should be training a child that the way to get their point across is by respectful entreaty.
 - c. The way to end persistent begging and whining is not by rewarding it, nor by ignoring it, but by punishing it with a gift: give the child something to really cry about.
 - d. Remember, the parent is the one that is supposed be doing the manipulating, not the child.
3. Or, what lesson is a child learning who is given everything he wants when he wants it? Do not be surprised if such a child grows up to be overweight and floundering in debt.
4. Or how are you training a child when you do everything for him? Do not be surprised if he grows up shirking responsibility. You trained him that way.

VIII. Effective parenting to *bring up a child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord* does not require flawless leadership and training. But it does mean maintaining a positive course that takes into consideration the power of love, natural affection, foibles of human nature, discipline, and the contrary influences of this world which will handicap parent and child in the developmental regimen. The effective parent will be training himself while figuring out how to train the child.

- A. There are some obvious obstacles to effective parenting.
 1. There is a battle for the mind of the child.
 - a. This is witnessed as a child comes into contact with neighborhood friends, school, the media and society.
 - b. The situation is much more pronounced now than in earlier generations due

- to a general deterioration of society's morals, the plethora of distracting and too-often corrupting media, and the reduction of people who share Biblical values.
- c. Beware of letting “the world” determine your child’s training, experiences and reward system. We are not to be conformed to this world where we have better knowledge from God’s word as to how things should be done. The course of this world, without restraint and guidance, is the path of destruction. **ROM 12:2; EPH 2:1-2.**
2. Complete isolation from the world is an imperfect answer. **1CO 5:9-10.**
 - a. At some point a child is going to have to exercise his senses to discern between good and evil in society and in what he permits or denies in his own life. This is where training comes in. **ISA 7:16.**
 - b. Forbidding a child to have any exposure at all to negative or competitive influences is to ill prepare him for the real world.
 - c. Conversely, overexposing a child to negative or competitive influences is to virtually guarantee his moral pollution. **1CO 15:33; PRO 13:20.**
 - d. Somewhere between the extremes of overprotection and overpermissiveness is a reasonable approach.
 - e. A noble goal is to strive to make home-life such a positive thing that the aberrant behavior of the world holds out nothing alluring to a child.
 3. The structure of modern society poses handicaps to successful parenting.
 - a. The pressures of cultural trends and devalued currency (inflation, monetized debt, etc.) have encouraged the habit of both parents working outside the home, which usually means that children are trained/cared for by someone other than their mother, or that they become “latch-key” children left to themselves (an unhealthy model, **PRO 29:15**).
 - b. The digital age has taken over everything, and the spiritual, emotional, psychological, neurological and moral consequences of digital “connection” are evident everywhere.
 - c. Schools with extracurricular activity dominate large chunks of time.
 - d. Age groups are isolated for large blocks of time creating a peer culture. Strong horizontal relationships tend to weaken vertical relationships.
 - e. The increase of material goods tends to lessen the need for human relationships.
- B. The Biblical ideal for effective parenting and wholesome family life is **DEUT 6:4-9**.
1. Normal life is to be saturated with the plan, presence and love of God which teaches His care of us, selflessness, humility and devotion to higher principles than lust.
 2. This exhortation was timely in view of what would be encountered in Canaan:
 - a. Affluence. **DEUT 8:6-18.**
 - b. Competitive religions. **DEUT 12:1-3, 29-31.**
 - c. Seductive women. **DEUT 7:3-4.**
 - d. Alternate commandment-free lifestyles (deathstyles?). **LEV 18.**
 3. God's preparatory directives for Israel are as relevant today as then. Parents: Prepare your children for contest with Canaan.
- C. There are costs to effective parenting.
1. Evaluate children in a long-term perspective. It is easy to reckon other demands of time more important when children are small.
 2. The rich young ruler would not make needed adjustments in his lifestyle. **MAR 10:13-27.**

3. Personal freedoms such as leisure time, habits, words and phrases and evaluations made in the presence of children may have to go.
 4. Because of a lack of time due to numerous involvements, a parent may handle problems in the home with haste and force when patience and understanding would prove more effective.
 5. An effective parent must have a definition of success which differs from that of the world. Submission to God's claims relative to parenting may be painful and costly.
- D. The effective parent will lead first of all by example.
1. You want to teach a child diligence. Does your work ethic agree with what you want the child to embrace?
 2. You want the child to prioritize spiritual things.
 - a. Is your day so overwhelmed with work and the cares of life that Scripture is choked out? **LUK 8:14.**
 - b. Is your faith little or great when it comes to matters of everyday needs? **MAT 6:25-34.**
 - c. Does your child have any doubts that prayer is a vital part of your life?
 - d. Does your attitude towards God's house leave the child with the impression that you value it very highly?
 3. You want the child to learn patience. Are you patient with others? with your child? Are you patient in the matter of acquisitions or are you impulsive?
 4. You want the child to learn endurance. Do you just quit that household or yard task at the first hint of sweat or fatigue?
 5. You want the child to learn to handle frustration and disappointment with dignity and patience. Do you "lose it" when a planned outing is cancelled or if something breaks down or if you see someone driving foolishly?
 6. You want the child to learn that life is not defined by material acquisitions. **LUK 12:15.**
 - a. Do you have any room left in your garage or closet?
 - b. Do you smother the child with stuff as if you think by that to buy the child's affection or obedience?
 - c. An empty cardboard box is full of imagination.
- E. The effective parent will also lead through verbal communication.
1. Words may build or destroy. **PRO 18:21.**
 2. Instruction should be:
 - a. *clear.* Is the instruction expressed as a wish or a command? As a child develops positive patterns, less instruction should be needed.
 - b. *well-defined and within the child's comprehension and ability to perform.*
 - (1) Time limits may be helpful because time passes slowly for a child.
 - (2) A timer or a suitable sweep-hand kitchen clock can help even little children gain a perspective on time ("...when the big hand points to ---, you should be all done.").
 - (3) NOTE: Whereas a newborn cannot be held accountable to verbal commands, do not underestimate a young child's ability to know what you are commanding when he doesn't even yet have the ability of verbal dialogue.
 - (4) "Your temptation will be to wait until your children are speaking and able to articulate their rebellion before you deal with it. When our oldest child was approximately 8 months old, we were confronted

with parenting our first mobile child. He crawled everywhere. We had a bookshelf constructed of boards and bricks. Fearing the shelf would fall on him, Margy told him not to pull himself up by the shelf. After moving him away from the shelf, she left the room. As she peeked in on him, she observed him surveying the room. Not seeing her, he headed back toward the forbidden bookshelf. Here was a young child, not yet able to walk or to talk, looking to see if the coast was clear so he could disobey. Obviously, he was old enough to be disciplined.”

(Tedd Tripp, Shepherding a Child's Heart, Second Edition, p. 152)

- c. *certain*. Do not train your child to respond only to increased volume of command or vain repetition. He will quickly figure out that you didn't really mean it the first time.
3. Here are four types of parents that fail in verbal leadership.
 - a. *The dishonest parent*. This one doesn't check for results when a command is given. He/she doesn't mean what he/she says. Responsible leaders will check for results. **LUK 19:15; 2CO 9:2-3.**
 - b. *The threatening parent*. This one is really offering choices. Is disobedience worth more than what the parent threatened would happen, especially when the child knows that the parent will just keep on offering the threat for a while?
 - c. *The exploding parent*. This one merely throws tantrums, causing the child to focus more on the parent's reaction than on the ethic of his own behavior.
 - (1) This parent is merely causing the child an inconvenience.
 - (2) The message is basically, “Do as you wish if you can stand the heat.”
 - d. *The disinterested or silent parent*. “Do what you want, just don't bother me.” This parent is in essence telling the child that he doesn't really care about him.
- F. The effective parent strives to teach abilities to the children.
 1. A parent will teach every day whether by design or neglect.
 2. Abilities are taught through planning family experiences.
 3. Take advantage of opportunities to have a child assist in responsibility.
 - a. A child should feel that he has a role to play in the family's success and survival.
 - b. Adjust the responsibility level according to age and ability. **JOH 16:12.**
 - c. An example of a chance to share responsibility might be something like repairing a bicycle.
 - (1) A lazy father would postpone or ignore the job.
 - (2) A busy father might just quickly do it himself.
 - (3) A wise father would take time to demonstrate how the repair is done and seek assistance from his child. This is an opportunity to teach diagnosis, proper tool selection and maintenance.
 4. Expose the child to skills other than your own and provide opportunities for cultivation if interest in a healthy area is sensed.
 5. Take time to interrogate so as to stimulate and challenge the child's mind.
- G. The effective parent strives to teach values to the children.
 1. Values are taught through lifestyle as well as words. Know the value of exposure to your manners of response, evaluation and overall conduct.
 2. Through mass media, social media and public education, children today are

- exposed to many rival models of behavior. Be forewarned and guard accordingly!
3. Create experiences to jam the family together for learning such as games, quizzes, trips or picnics.
 4. Conduct in the house is a great area for modeling. How is your marriage and how do you handle stress and disagreement?
- H. The effective parent will strive to be approachable.
1. How do you respond to repeated busy signals on the phone or to unreturned calls, emails, texts, etc.?
 2. Are you open, responsive and concerned with your child? Or do you frequently respond with: "Wait until later," or "I don't care what you do." How do children feel about THESE "busy signals?"
 3. Consider how important you figure in a child's world.
 - a. Don't try to buy off kids with money and stuff. That can warp a child's values.
 - b. It is really you that your child needs and desires, not your wallet.
 4. David was comforted with the approachableness of God his heavenly Father.
PSA 4:3.
 5. Consider why some parents do not listen well.
 - a. They would rather speak because they deem their information more important.
 - b. They have trained themselves to listen to only what they deem important.
 - c. They do not know how to listen.
 - (1) They do not know how to interpret gestures, facial expressions, word choices, posture, timing, etc.
 - (2) The average parent can reflect upon their own childhood to gain insights into the expressive techniques of children.
 6. Consider some things to listen for.
 - a. *Questions*, which are not only a child's way of getting information, but also to see whether or not a parent can be relied upon and whether or not a parent is interested in the child.
 - b. *Mood changes*, which may indicate a need for affection because the child feels unloved or alone.
 - c. *Downgrading remarks about self*, which may indicate that the child is struggling with guilt issues or burdened about failure. This child needs affirmation.
 - d. *Looks of disappointment*, which may simply mean a trumped will or may indicate some healthy intention has been frustrated.
 - (1) The disappointed look of a trumped will may need a lesson in humility and submissiveness.
 - (2) The disappointed look of frustrated good intention needs to be assured that the thought and effort are more valuable than the outcome.
 7. Consider some important times to listen.
 - a. *Bedtime*, which may be the child's closing efforts to make right the wrongs of the day or to seek reassurance of love and security.
 - b. *Moments of exhilaration or creativity*, which are a child's expression of personal delight and satisfaction, and also a way of saying, "See, I'm trying....," or "See, this is what motivates me..."
 - c. *Moments of penitence*, during which a child is needing to "unload"

Note God's pro-active mercy in **GEN 19:16**.

- f. *evaluations of self, others or events*. Is the child rationalizing bad behavior, bitter, belittling others or exaggerating?
 - g. *potential situations of conflict*. Diffuse the potential for conflict instead of reacting with anger and frustration when the crisis breaks out. **PRO 22:3**.
 - (1) Example: A long family car trip has the potential for all kinds of conflict as weariness, boredom and cramped confines set the stage for irritability. Plan travel time to allow for stops. Encourage constructive activity while in the car to "eat up the miles."
 - (2) Example: The drudgery of household chores can be softened by limiting excess stuff and rotating jobs among siblings.
4. Consider three principles of vigilance.
- a. Know the stress-limits of the child. A child has three high points of emotional pressure:
 - (1) *Insecurity*, or not knowing what to depend on.
 - aa. Insecurity may be manifested by babyishness, aggressiveness, stomach ache, etc. A child may be wondering if he is really cared for.
 - bb. Consistency in the home helps to meet the need for security. If a disruption in the routine of the home is foreseen, take extra pains to reassure the child.
 - cc. Knowing that he has a secure home environment goes a long way to the positive development of a child.
 - (2) *Puberty*, a time when powerful hormonal changes can cause considerable emotional fluctuations.
 - aa. A vigilant parent would forewarn a child as to what to expect and would respond with understanding.
 - bb. A vigilant parent would also make it clear that the emotional changes that attend puberty do not excuse the child from respect and duty in the home. The world into which the child is being thrust does not generally excuse bad attitude, behavior or performance because of emotional issues.
 - (3) *Youthful competition and pride*, which are two sides of the same coin.
 - aa. The extremes are the overachiever who must always win or the apathetic underachiever who is reluctant to try.
 - bb. A parent may have to deflate destructive pride or encourage a crushed spirit.
 - cc. Pride may be an issue in both cases. Sometimes underachieving is due to one being too proud of self to submit to the possibility of not measuring up to or besting others.
 - dd. Children need to be encouraged that the victory is in the trying, not the winning, while knowing also that success must be based on merit.
 - b. Establish rules of conduct.
 - (1) Clearly define rules in terms that the child can understand and check to see if there was comprehension.
 - (2) Avoid impromptu, unpredictable rules that are made on the strength

- of force alone.
- (3) Establish godly behavioral laws which admit to no exceptions and consistently enforce them, such as: truthfulness, respect for those in authority, respect for other's property, respect for God and His name, etc.
- (4) Establish convictions: things judged right or wrong in view of what is deemed better or best. Examples: diet, arrival times, rising early, orderliness, etc.
- c. Establish a process of decision-making.
 - (1) Consider the personal history and situation of the child rather than basing the decision on incomplete information. Example: Is an oversight an obvious rebellion or a childish error?
 - (2) A thorough knowledge of the child's demeanor should provide the answer to the above question and should bear upon your response.
 - (3) In dealing with transgression, consider the temptation and ask yourself if you provoked it. **EPH 6:4.**
 - (4) What is the long-term growth effect of a decision?
 - (5) Determine where exceptions can be made. Exceptions can be made on personal convictions, not on laws.

IX. Here is a list of things that need to be trained into children.

- A. Train the importance of faith (belief, trust, confidence) in what God has declared in Scripture. God cannot lie (**TIT 1:1-2**) and His word is utterly reliable in all things seen or unseen. **HEB 11:1-3, 6-10.**
- B. Train the importance of hope, especially the hope of a better life in a better body in a better environment free of sin and death, and this implies patience to endure present trouble. **ROM 8:24-25; 5:3-5.**
- C. Train the importance of charity: selflessness in the service of God. **1CO 13.**
- D. Train the fear of God. **ECC 12:13.**
 - 1. This fear must not be according to the precepts of men. **ISA 29:13.**
 - a. Mind the connection of "...removed their heart from me..."
 - b. When the heart is removed from God, the intellect conjures up alternate ideas of God, and this is the path to idolatry: inventing a god that suits you.
 - 2. The fear of God is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom. **PRO 1:7; 9:10.**
 - 3. The fear of God is to hate what God hates. **PRO 8:13.**
 - 4. The fear of God should be greater than the fear of anything else. **LUK 12:4-5; EXO 1:17.**
 - 5. Teach them the omniscience and justice of God, that nothing escapes His sight and there will be an exposure and judgment in due time. **HEB 4:12-13; 1CO 4:5.**
 - 6. Teach them of accountability to God and judgment to come, that this world and life are not the end of the story. **ACT 17:30-31; ROM 14:10-12.**
 - 7. Prepare them to meet God. **1JO 2:28.**
 - 8. The fear of God promotes right priorities: love of God before love of man. **MAT 22:36-40.**
 - 9. The fear of God is the chief reason for doing right since the most important question is "What will God think of or do to me if I do wrong?" Make sure your child understands that their training and correction is a matter of obedience to God: both the parent's and the child's obedience to God.
 - 10. Teach them the Ten Commandments. **EXO 20:1-17.**

- E. Train the importance of prayer, and our Lord's taught manner is a sound basis. **MAT 6:5-13.**
1. This requires that you be a prayerful person or your training will look hollow.
 2. Children should be prayed for and prayed with by parents whose very lives are visibly known to be prayerful.
- F. Train the priority of God and His righteousness. **MAT 6:33.**
- a. Show and teach them that what is best for man's soul should rule over other concerns. **HEB 11:24-26 c/w 2PE 2:6-8.**
 - b. Godliness is best for now and preparation for eternity. **1TI 4:7-9.**
- G. Train the value of reading over viewing, especially the reading of Scripture. **2TI 3:15-17.**
- a. Reading demands knowledge of words and grammar. Viewing demands little input or processing and triggers the dopamine effect without rational thought.
 - b. Good books expand knowledge and imagination: you form the images in your mind that are described in the text rather than let someone else's images rule your thoughts.
- H. Train the worship of God. **JOH 4:23-24.**
- a. By your own fear of God and devotion to Him, train your child that the awesome Creator and Judge of the universe is to be publicly praised regardless of trouble. **ACT 16:25.**
 - b. Show and teach your child that church worship is necessary, highly prioritized and an introduction to eternity. **PSA 78:4; 84:10; 122:1; EPH 3:21.**
 - c. Don't expect your child to highly value God's house if you play fast and loose with your devotion and duty to it.
- I. Train obedience and submission to legitimate authority. **EPH 6:1-3; ROM 13:1-2.**
- a. Show them and teach them to not revile rulers, starting with you. **EXO 21:17; 22:28; ACT 23:5; 2PE 2:10.**
 - b. Show them and teach them that church officers are legitimate authorities. **HEB 13:17.**
- J. Train the value of labor and merit against idleness and handouts. **PRO 19:15; ECC 2:24; 3:22; GAL 6:4; 2TH 3:10-12.**
- a. Life is not all rest and play and work comes first. **HEB 4:4; JOH 9:4.**
 - b. "Feats before treats. Chores before stores."
- K. Train wisdom. They must learn to apply knowledge and understanding. **PRO 4:7-8.**
- a. There is a world of information but an island of wisdom and this is discernment. **PRO 14:15; 15:2, 14; ECC 7:11-12; 10:10.**
 - b. The greatest wisdom is not found in Solomon or Aristotle but Jesus Christ. **EPH 5:14-17; COL 2:3.**
- L. Train humility and thankfulness, not pride. **1PE 5:5-6; 1TH 5:18.**
- a. We are awash in the culture of self: self-love, self-realization, self-importance, self-satisfaction, self-esteem. Do not train your children to think that the world revolves around them.
 - b. "People with high self-regard, the evidence says, possess low regard for others. Instead of seeking opportunities to serve others, they seek to manipulate others. Furthermore, people with high self-regard tend to anti-social behavior. People incarcerated in maximum security prisons have very high self-regard, for example... So, to the question, 'Isn't it possible for a child to have high self-esteem and a high level of respect for others?' The answer is an unequivocal no... The Amish do not value or promote self-esteem (they call it 'being prideful') and they don't think there's a problem they can't solve (and you'd be hard pressed to identify one they

- haven't solved)." (Dr. John Rosemond, The Washington Times, April 12, 2009)
- c. "Raising a child who possesses high other-regard simply requires that parents do what our great-grandparents did. They put their marriages first, not their kids. They gave their children all that they truly needed and very little of what they simply wanted. They assigned daily chores from age three on. They expected their children to always do their best, in whatever setting."
(<http://rosemond.com/blog/self-esteem/>)
 - d. "Researchers have discovered that people with high self-esteem tend to overestimate their abilities. If anything, they are over-confident. As a result, they don't cope well when life deals them a bad hand or their performance doesn't live up to their self-expectation. For those reasons, they are highly prone to depression. Because they believe that anything they do is deserving of reward, they also tend to underperform... Society is strengthened and culture is moved forward by the efforts of people who think of others before they think of themselves, not by people who think they are the cat's meow. In that regard, one of the most foreboding things about contemporary American culture is that today's young people regard the narcissistic, self-promoting celebrity as more of a role model than George Washington or Abraham Lincoln." (<http://www.signalscv.com/archives/62177/>)
- M. Train self-motivation, that they should be diligent and dutiful without oversight.
PRO 6:6-8; PHIL 2:12.
 - N. Train independence, that they should not follow the herd of swine off the cliff, and that they should work toward freedom to form their own lives as adults.
ROM 12:2; 1CO 15:33; GEN 2:24.
 - O. Train enthusiasm, to live godly with great zeal and spirit.
ECC 9:10; ROM 12:11; COL 3:22-24.
 - P. Train discipline, that they should learn the value of denying themselves and pushing on in doing well in spite of weariness. **1CO 9:24-27; TIT 2:12; GAL 6:9.**
 - Q. Train honesty, that they learn the value of a good name and to own up to fault rather than resort to lying, hiding, blame-shifting, counter-accusing, false expediency, etc.
PRO 12:22; 22:1; ROM 12:17 ct/w GEN 3:12; EXO 32:21-24.
 - R. Train patience, that they learn that rewards and goals should be "learned and earned" and immediate gratification, easy riches or perfect equity are unwise expectations.
PSA 37:7; ECC 7:8; PRO 20:21; 13:11; ROM 2:7; 1PE 2:20.
 - S. Train friendliness, that they learn to relate well to others and choose good companions.
PRO 18:24; 27:10, 17; 13:20; PSA 119:63.
 - T. Train orderliness, that there is a time and place for everything and orderliness saves time.
1CO 14:40; EPH 5:15-16.
 - U. Train resilience, that they do what is right in spite of uncertainty. **ECC 9:11; 11:6.**
 - V. Train courage and positivity, especially in doing right. **HEB 13:6; PHIL 4:13.**
 - W. Train doing good, the great example and command of our Lord.
ACT 10:38; MAT 5:43-48.
 - X. Train personal responsibility and accountability to counter tendencies of making excuses or rationalizing poor behavior. Make sure that they see a good example in you.
PRO 22:13; MAT 25:25.
- X. Bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord includes training by disciplinary punishment.
- A. Initial observations.
 1. This is an area of child-training which can be both a challenge to the wisdom of

- men and also of your faith.
2. Dr. Benjamin Spock (pro-abortion pediatrician) integrated the philosophies of Sigmund Freud and John Dewey into his errant views on child-training: “John Dewey and Freud said that kids don’t have to be disciplined into adulthood but can direct themselves toward adulthood by following their own will.”
(<https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/bday/0502.html>)
 3. Dr. Spock himself later realized that his notions of letting children follow their own will were terribly flawed: “‘If she was a type who could be progressively intimidated, her baby could turn into a tyrant in six months. He could not only learn to stay awake until 10 or 11 o’clock at night but demand that his exhausted mother carry him around in her arms.’ Dr. Spock took that problem into account in 1954, when he began to prepare revisions. As he put it later, ‘I wrote that more mothers got into difficulty from being afraid to give firm leadership than from being too rigid. And I put more emphasis on the rights of parents, on the need for firm parental leadership, and on my conviction that firmness makes for not only better-behaved children but for happier ones.’” (Ibid.)
 4. Scripture is the ultimate child psychology book from the ultimate Parent, God. The wise will exalt its wisdom over the contrary wisdom of fallible men. We are not wiser than God. **PSA 119:128; PRO 29:15.**
- B. Punishment comes in two forms: natural and artificial.
1. Natural punishment is the obvious consequence of wrongdoing such as loss or injury.
 - a. Example: A child through wilful neglect or a foul mood ruins his favorite possession. Parents do well to not haste to replace the object.
 - b. Example: A child insists on playing with forbidden things and ends up with an injury.
 - c. Parents do wrong to shield children from all potentials for consequential punishment. Where there is not an obviously debilitating consequence to a misdeed, sometimes it is wise to let the child feel the sting of his own actions.
 - d. Consider how God thus teaches us. **PRO 1:29-31.**
 2. Artificial punishment is a devised means of punishment to help a child associate pain, disappointment or hardship with wrongdoing.
 - a. This may take the form of lost privileges or imposed duty.
 - b. This may take the form of *beating* (infliction of repeated blows): a Biblical directive for the shaping of a child's character.
 - c. Every misdeed need not be dealt with by beating/spanking but rebellion should meet with the rod of correction. Discern between ignorant disobedience and presumptuous, defiant disobedience. **LUK 12:47-48.**
 - d. Children will NOT outgrow rebellion. **PRO 22:15; 19:18.**
 - e. The Law of Moses dealt severely with the stubborn, rebellious child who had been properly trained. **DEU 21:18.**
 - f. God draws strong lines at rebellion and stubbornness. **1SAM 15:23.**
- C. When the time comes for artificial punishment, particularly beating, consider:
1. Is the punishment for the good of the child or is it just the volcanic reaction of a parent frustrated by his/her own irresponsibility, irritability, etc.?
 2. Is it taking frustrations with your spouse out on the child?
 3. Is it taking frustrations out on the child for pain or perceived injustices in one’s own upbringing?

4. Is it taking frustrations out on someone too small to retaliate YET or too small to learn to hate an overreactive parent YET?
- D. Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child and is to be driven out by the rod. **PRO 22:15.**
 1. foolishness: The quality or condition of being foolish.
 2. foolish: Fool-like; wanting in sense or judgment.
 3. fool: *n.* One deficient in judgement or sense, one who acts or behaves stupidly, a silly person, a simpleton. (In Biblical use applied to vicious or impious persons.).
 4. rod: A straight, slender shoot or wand, growing upon or cut from a tree, bush, etc. 2. An instrument of punishment, either one straight stick, or a bundle of twigs bound together. *to spare the rod*, etc.
 5. Don't be wiser than God and try to purge foolishness from the child's heart by overlooking it, pacifying it, buying it off, etc.
- E. The rod is an instrument of *chastening*. **PRO 13:24.**
 1. chasten: To inflict disciplinary or corrective punishment on; to visit with affliction for the purpose of moral improvement; to correct, discipline, chastise.
 2. The purpose for chastening a child is to teach him that irresponsible actions have painful consequences.
 3. Training a child to associate punishment with transgression trains him to understand the justice of God and the chastisement of Christ for our sins. **ISA 53:5.**
 4. If a child is always shielded from the consequences of misbehavior, he will not be prepared for adult life.
 5. If a child does not consider the pain of his chastening grievous, he may not be getting the appropriate measure of chastening. **HEB 12:11.**
 6. The rod should produce real tears/crying (**PRO 19:18**) and most any parent can tell when the tears/crying are phony.
- F. The rod of chastening is a tool of instruction for the child to impart wisdom to him. **PRO 29:15.**
 1. The object of training a child is to impart wisdom since wisdom will direct the child in the way which he *should go* and so bring his life to its fullest potential. **PRO 4:7-13.**
 2. Two things are needed to impart wisdom: the rod and reproof.
 - a. reprove: To reject. 2. To express disapproval of (conduct, actions, beliefs, etc.); to censure, condemn. 3. To reprehend, rebuke, blame, chide, or find fault with (a person).
 - b. The application of the rod without a notion of disapproval of conduct being conveyed along with it leaves a child in bewildered pain, not wiser.
- G. Establish sound disciplinary patterns when the child is young. **PRO 13:24.**
 1. betimes: At an early time, period, or season; early in the year; early in life.
 2. Early correction will likely see a gradual reduction of beatings and late starters have their work cut out for them but "better late than never." Eventually, a consistent change in the power-shift should convince a child that Dad and Mom mean business.
 3. Very small children will not understand verbal rebuke or reasoning, but they will understand physical pain.
 - a. Associating pain with dangerous behavior or misbehavior is the best way to help them know what is wrong.
 - b. Repeat the word "no" during the punishment which reinforces to a little child what that word means.
 - c. Over time, verbal rebuke can be effective in warning about a wrong or a

- danger.
- H. Do not resort to escalating anger or shouting to get action. Use action to get action.
 - 1. Some parents repeat their instructions with increasing loudness until they reach an exploding point when they finally take action. This trains the child:
 - a. to recognize that point of action and obey only then.
 - b. that he has several chances to disobey.
 - c. to think that screaming is an acceptable way to enforce one's will.
 - 2. While anger may be revealed in punishing a child, it should not be the punishment in and of itself and it should be controlled.
 - 3. Adult screaming and frustration produce a disrespect in the mind of the child because he perceives your inability to control him or yourself.
 - a. Children will test your leadership to see if it is worthy of respect.
 - b. Children respect strength and courage as is evident in the characters they select as heroes.
 - c. Children will test to see if the rules hold.
 - 4. Adult anger and frustration can also turn the event into a personal vendetta rather than training the child for his own good.
 - I. Do not let the child's tears dissuade you from administering appropriate discipline.
PRO 19:18.
 - J. Give consideration to sickness or fatigue when a child's conduct is less than sterling but avoid using those things as excuses for a child's intolerable behavior. Children will figure out how to manipulate you by feigned sickness or fatigue to get their way and avoid chastening.
 - K. The chastening parent is to be *reverenced* (**HEB 12:9**). Do not allow a child to express contempt for your rule and discipline. It is just as important to train *attitudes* as it is to train *actions*.
 - L. Here are some guidelines for effective punishment.
 - 1. Don't lose control. **EPH 6:4.**
 - 2. Be consistent. This helps the child know what behavior will not be tolerated.
 - 3. Match the punishment to the person. The level of punishment appropriate to a nine-year-old would not be appropriate to a three-year-old.
 - 4. Match the punishment to the misdeed. Childish slip-ups are one thing. Rebellion is a different story.
 - 5. Do not let a child take advantage of your concerns about punishing in public. Promise the child that the rod will be administered upon returning home and then keep the promise.
 - 6. Be thorough. Make an impression upon the child. Make it hurt.
 - 7. Do not lose sight of the objective of chastening.
 - a. Chastisement should be for the benefit of the child rather than a venting of your frustrations.
 - b. The objective of discipline is to correct and direct the child, not to make him think that he cannot do anything right. **COL 3:21.**
 - 8. Have a beginning and an end.
 - a. Begin by explaining the reason for the punishment.
 - b. End with complete forgiveness and restoration. Affection after punishment shows that the behavior, not the child, was detested. You thus train the child to understand God's mercy. **PSA 103:8-14.**
 - c. The child needs to perceive that what you do for him and to him to train him is because you love him, care for him and want what is best for him.

9. Remember, discipline of children and imposing restraints upon them can save them from hell in this life caused by their own folly or being unprepared for life in a real world of laws, civil powers, bosses, rules, rewards and punishments. **PRO 23:13-14.**
10. Do not allow a child to develop a pattern of always apologizing his way out of punishment. Know your child and be sensitive to trends.
11. Parents should agree on their punishment policy and share in its application lest one parent be deemed the ogre.
12. Do not be a pushover or your children will ignore what you say. **GEN 19:14.**
13. The disciplined child brings rest and delight. **PRO 29:17 c/w HEB 12:11.**

XI. Summary for parents.

- A. Make Jesus Christ and spiritual priorities preeminent in your life and your home.
- B. Be the manipulator, not the manipulated.
- C. Set a good example in words, attitude, principles, conduct.
- D. Reward good behavior, punish bad behavior. Do not confuse these principles.
- E. Rule them or they will rule you.
- F. Expect disappointment, not flawlessness.
- G. Love them godly with tenderness, boundaries, corrections and support.
- H. Prepare them for the realities of this world and the next world.