

# Chapter 14

## **CHRISTIAN FAMILY 4**

### *PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITY TO CHILDREN*

#### *What's a Parent to Do?*

***Then Manoah prayed to the LORD. He said, "Lord please let the man of God come back to us again and give us more instructions about this son who is to be born."  
(Judges 13:8 New Living Translation)***

- I. Introduction: As we begin this study on Parents' Responsibility to Children, we need to consider some problems facing parents in today's world. (Deuteronomy 4:10; Deuteronomy 11:18-21; Psalm 78:5)
  - A. First, there is the breakup of the extended family and close community. Many factors contribute to this situation. There is the increased mobility, job and career changes, emigration, divorce and other forms of family breakup and breakdown, aging, and even the "Generation Gap."
  - B. Second, there is the breakdown of respect for established authority. We have many role models of rebellious youth. Movies and television entertainment overwhelmingly carries a message of rebellion against authority structures which are presented as outdated, corrupt and uncaring.
  - C. Third there is wide exposure to outside influences and temptations. There must be 50 times as many ways for young people to behave badly as in the last generation.
  - D. Peer pressure is always a factor. But now it's more expensive, more exclusive, and perhaps more important to "fit in." And it's a great leverage on parents; "Everybody has one." "Everyone goes there."
  - E. Conclusion: The task of parenting is becoming progressively harder. What does God expect of us? What can we do?
- II. Parents' responsibilities to children fall into three major categories:
  - A. Parents are to provide for the needs of their children. It is important for parents to learn the difference between the needs of their children and the "wants" of their children. (1 Timothy 5:8)
  - B. Parents are instructed by the Lord to teach, train, and discipline their children. There are several ways that we can look at the word train as it is used in Proverbs 22:6. It can mean to train them as soldiers, to keep them under discipline, to teach them to learn and respond to words of command and discipline. Deuteronomy 6:7 says that we are to; *"Impress them (the commands of God) on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."* It can also mean to give them a taste for the ways of God; a good, pleasant taste. The strength of the taste for God that is established early in their life will have the ability to keep them or if they stray to draw them back to God and His ways. (Proverbs 22:6)

- C. Parents also have the responsibility as well as the privilege to help their children become successful in life and to fulfill the creative potential God has placed in them. (2 Tim 1:6)
- III. The basis for fulfilling our parental responsibility should be love, just as God's responsibility to us as his children is fulfilled in love.

***My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in. Proverbs 3:11-12***

- A. Parents should provide for their children because of their love for them. Parents should also teach, train, and discipline them because of their love for their children. (Proverbs 13:24; Proverbs 19:18; Proverbs 29:17)
- B. God's every action towards His children is love-motivated. (Hebrews 12:5; Revelation 3:19)
- C. Parents need to be aware that for their children to have a right concept of God, their actions and discipline towards them must also be love-motivated.
- IV. There are many needs that parents must provide for their children. They include the physical needs, the emotional needs, the need to have a basis for Godly character, and the spiritual needs of their children.
  - A. The physical needs of the children are visible and apparent. Many parents work so hard to fulfill physical needs of their children that they neglect to provide for the other needs. As parents we should, of course, provide food that is nutritious as well as enjoyable. Clean, modest, and appropriate clothing is also another physical need that parents are to provide. Housing is a physical need that parents are also responsible to provide, remembering that making a home is more important than a fancy or elegant house.
    - 1. The wants that children have are not necessarily the same as their needs. Children often want things they don't need, things that would even be detrimental to them. It is one of the parents' responsibilities to learn to distinguish between wants and needs; those things that would be beneficial and those that might be detrimental to the child.
    - 2. A physically well cared for person is not necessarily well cared for in the sight of God. It is necessary and important to look at the other needs of children and to work at providing for them as well.
  - B. Parents need to be aware of the emotional needs of their children. Children need to be recognized as real people with real emotions. They feel hurt, love, disappointment, fear, discouragement, and excitement the same as adults do.
    - 1. Children need their parents even more than they need the things parents provide. If children have their parents, their real love and care, they'll have the things they need. Children need to know they have an irreplaceable position in their parents' schedule of priorities. They need time from their parents, both quality and

quantity time. This must include time to do things the children are interested in.

They need to have times of their parents full, undivided, uninterrupted, unwavering attention, even if it requires making an appointment or a date. Those we love get our attention. They need sometimes to see that their parents are willing to change their plans for the benefit of the children. Most of all, children need the security of knowing that of all their parents' emotions toward them, love will always be strongest; stronger than anger, stronger than disappointment, stronger than frustration.

2. Children need to have friends. Parents can teach their children that to have friends they must themselves be friendly. Children should learn how to be involved with people; making conversation, helping others, being kind. Is your home an open and welcoming place? Is your home open to the friends of your children?
  3. Children need acceptance for who they are as a person, not just for what they do. Children need approval for who they are as well as for the things they may do. Children need affection. They need to be touched!
- C. Parents need to provide their children with a basis for developing Godly character in their lives. Fifty percent of a child's natural character (his basic values), is formed by age three and seventy-five percent formed by age five. Parents need to be serious about this responsibility. Parents first (and foremost) provide the pattern for character by their example. Parents don't try to fool your children. "What you are speaks so loudly it's hard to hear what you say." If you as a parent are kind, patient, faithful, honest, dependable, loving and compassionate; then your children will have a good beginning in the direction of developing Godly character. (1 Corinthians 11:1)
- D. Providing for their children's spiritual needs is a very important responsibility of parents. As a parent, you must endeavor to reproduce yourself spiritually in your children.
1. First, every child needs to know he or she belongs to God. As parents you can develop and maintain that emphasis. Parents can begin by dedicating their children to the Lord and then continue to reassure them that they are a gift from God and that as parents you have the joy and privilege of raising them for the Lord.
  2. Second, parents can begin at a very young age to teach their children the truths of God's Word. They can share with their children principles to live by both by teaching and by example.
  3. Parents have not only the responsibility but the joy and privilege of leading their children into a relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Begin to lead them as they are able to follow. Parents need to be careful that they don't push or drive them as well as being careful not to let it fall to someone else to lead them into their relationship with Jesus. Realize that some of a child's first spiritual experiences and responses can begin as early as eighteen months to two years and that repentance could come as early as three to five years. Parents should also lead their children to respond to water baptism and the receiving of the Holy Spirit as part of the full gospel. A parent's example is of prime importance. Their

children should know that repentance, prayer, faith, worship, and response to God is part of the parent's own walk with God.

E. Parents need to know and understand that children need heroes! In fact, children will have heroes (role models). If parents don't provide heroes, someone else will! Historically, people have created their own heroes, gods, and supermen. Many generations have looked to athletes, sportsmen, great warriors for their heroes. Today a new wave of fantasy heroes are being foisted on our young people. Currently many young people look to entertainers as heroes. These entertainers often exemplify the most un-godly values and lifestyles.

1. God's Word, the Bible is a good place for parents to find and to share good heroes with their children. Hebrews 11 gives a long list of men and women that God considered to be heroes in the true sense.
2. How can we give our children proper heroes?
  - ❖ Teach them the right values to admire.
  - ❖ Teach them to value character rather than appearance.
  - ❖ Introduce them to biographies of great people, biographies of spiritual leaders, missionaries.
  - ❖ Show yourself an example of admiring the right things.

V. The Bible is clear that parents are responsible to teach, train and discipline their children. In order to do this properly parents need to understand that there is a process and order involved in the teaching, training, and discipline of their children.

A. Parents need to decide what they are going to expect from their children and how they want their children to behave. Then the first step is to teach and inform their children thoroughly concerning acceptable and unacceptable behavior, chores to be done, specific things to do and not to do. Children need to be instructed in every area of life. *"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child..."*

1. Children do not have to be taught to lie, they must be taught to tell the truth.
2. Children do not have to be taught to mock, they must be taught to show respect.
3. Children do not have to be taught to be rude, they must be taught to be polite.
4. Children do not have to be taught to be destructive, they must be taught to respect property and possessions.

B. Here are some basic skills that parents should teach and train their children in:

1. Children need to be taught basic hygiene: proper bathing and care of their teeth and hair.
2. Children need to be taught how to dress properly: how to tie their shoes, how to put clothes on, even how to match colors.

3. Children need to be taught how to eat properly.
  4. Children need to be taught how to clean their room.
  5. Children need to learn academic and communication skills.
  6. Children need to learn how to be polite to their elders.
  7. Children need to learn how to work.
  8. Children need to learn how to be good stewards of the things that belong not only to them, but others as well.
- C. Parents must teach before they train. Parents must teach before they discipline. Teaching is giving the child the facts: informing the mind, establishing truths, setting the standards that you as a parent want adhered to, setting boundaries that the child can respect. As parents it is important to be careful not to expect or demand a level of performance from a child if you have not taught the child how to do it. If you as the parent can not teach the child how to do something, you should not expect the child to do it! It is a process:
1. First, tell the children what you want them to do.
  2. Second, show the children how you want it to be done.
  3. Then let the children try it themselves.
  4. As they continue to do the thing you have asked them to do observe and frequently check their progress.
  5. Always encourage progress without expecting instant perfection.
- D. God does not expect us to be perfect parents, but rather to be responsible parents. Perfect parents try to produce perfect children. Responsible parents will have responsible children that will learn to deal with life in a difficult and complex world. For parents to help their children learn to be responsible they must give them responsibilities. Above all, parents can teach about the importance of being responsible by showing their children their example of being responsible. Parents need to help prepare their children to face and deal with life in the real world. It has been said, "The most important thing that parents can teach their children is how to get along without them."
- VI. What then is involved in the training of children? Training is helping a child to form good habits. Training will involve a repetition of instruction. Don't expect perfect behavior after just a one-time instruction. Training will involve enforced repetition of right behavior until a proper habit is established. Training will also involve discipline (not just the corrective kind) but rather external control. Training must be accompanied with instruction so that children will not be frustrated. Don't expect 20 year old behavior from a 10 year old child. Be reasonable. Training must be accompanied with patience so that the parent will not become frustrated.
- A. Training should involve discipline, but not be seen by either the parent or the child as punishment. The purpose in training is to establish good habit patterns. In order to establish good habit patterns, there will be the need for behavior control. Right behavior can be and must be enforced. The purpose of training coupled with discipline is not to create a

dependency on external control, but to establish a basis for internal control.

- B. Parents need to understand that their children can be trained to obey them the first time they speak to them. Children can hear their parents just as well the first time you speak as the fourth time (except perhaps for volume and tone). If parents train their children to respond to screams, this pattern will stay with them. If parents train their children to respond to their gentle but firm command, they will have a much better life. They will learn to respond to God in much the same way.
  - C. The parents' training of their children must be consistent to be effective. If the parent disciplines on the first command one time, the fifth scream another time, and yet another time does not follow through at all, the parent will train their child that obedience is like roulette: "Take a chance, win some, lose some." Parents, take the time to do it right. Parents pay the price now in time and attention or pay the price later in disappointment and tears.
- VII. Parents are expected to provide discipline and correction (not punishment) for their children. In the process of fulfilling their responsibilities as parents, God's Word clearly states that correction is necessary. God's Word says that if parents fail to fulfill their responsibility of correcting their children, they do not really love them, but hate them! Correction or discipline is not step one in the process. It is to be the third step, which follows and reinforces step one (instruction) and step two (training). Remember the motive for correction must be love. The purpose of discipline is to conquer the will not to break the spirit. (cp. Hebrews 12:5-11; Proverbs 13:24)
- A. Discipline in love is discipling your children, teaching them the difference between right and wrong, instilling in them a respect for authority, and helping them learn God's principles for living. This stands in marked contrast to abuse, which seeks only to hurt and punish. Proper discipline must nurture, helping children see why their wrong actions are harmful to themselves and others. To discipline with love doesn't always mean a light punishment; sometimes discipline must be firm to show the seriousness of the child's offense. The point is that it is always done in love with a positive goal in mind. The Bible tells us not to provoke our children lest they become resentful, but to raise them to love the Lord and avoid being wild or disobedient. (Ephesians 6:4; Titus 1:6)
  - B. What are some proper steps of correction that parents can and should take with their children? First, it is important to establish personal responsibility. The parent should ask the child, "What did you do?" not, "Why did you do that?" The parent should not attack or criticize the child, but rather should deal with their behavior and attitude, not their personality.

When it is time to discipline a child, the parent should get alone with the child. Disciplining a child in public may break his spirit. It is not good to embarrass the child. The parent should reflect grief, not anger. Sit down, look at the floor, be silent. This will cause the child to think of what they have done. It will also allow the parent to cool off and think of what discipline or correction to use.

You as the parent can establish God as final authority. "If I don't obey God and discipline you, then God will discipline me." Always associate correction and discipline with love. "I do this because I love you." Love will be sensed in the attitude of the parents more than in the words that are spoken. If the child thinks the parent is being unfair, tell them you will talk it over with God later. The parent must be careful to use only enough correction or discipline to conquer the child's will, not break his spirit. Always comfort and love

(cuddle) the child after discipline.

- C. The parent must follow through after the discipline and correction with the necessary steps. There must be restitution when necessary. This may take the form of an apology or even the repayment for damage. The children must learn that there will be consequences to their behavior.
- D. It is good for the parent(s) to evaluate the discipline and correction they have given. Was I in any way unfair? Did I correct in anger or frustration? Had I given enough teaching and training? Do I need for any of these or even other reasons to return to the child later and ask for his forgiveness?
- E. Discipline and correction of children has two sides to it. You cannot be a successful parent if you do not do it! You will not be a successful parent if that's all you do! Children thrive on acceptance, encouragement, and approval. If parents only correct, but do not encourage and show approval, they are running a very serious risk. Parents should make it ten parts acceptance and approval to one part correction. (Proverbs 13:24; Proverbs 19:18; Proverbs 22:15; Proverbs 23:13-14; Proverbs 29:15-17; Colossians 3:20)

### **SPECIAL NOTE FOR SINGLE PARENTS**

- 1. Have faith in God. He is the God of things as they are. He loves you and He loves your children.
- 2. Lean on, draw strength from the leadership of the church. Honor the leadership and other members of the Body. This will pay off in times of crisis.
- 3. Keep a close guard on your heart. (Proverbs 4:23)
- 4. Forgive. You must release all who have hurt you from judgment and from blame.
- 5. Understand God's unique hand upon you and your family. (Psalm 27:10; Psalm 68:5; 1 Corinthians 7:14)
- 6. Trust God to work beyond all principles and circumstances. (Judges 14:1-4)
- 7. Timothy came from a divided home. Take encouragement from this. God can do great things. (Acts 16:1-2; 1 Timothy 1:2-5)

### **PARENTING PRINCIPLES**

<b>What do we want to produce in our children and why?</b>
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#### **Faith in God**

If our faith isn't a living faith, there's nothing to impart. We must live our faith at home, at work, everywhere, for it to make a positive impression on our children. If they can't see positive benefits in the living of our faith, there's no reason for them to want it.

#### **Honesty**

To tell the truth. To respect the property and possessions of others. To be able to say "I was wrong."

## **Humility**

To be secure enough to acknowledge their imperfections and limitations. So much energy is wasted by trying to be something we're not. To accept oneself, to be oneself, to allow others the freedom to be themselves.

## **Kindness and Compassion**

Kindness (concern about the feelings of others). Compassion (concern about the needs and situations of others). To be willing to pay the price of showing kindness and compassion.

## **Right Values**

To know that right is right and wrong is wrong. To know the difference between real value and cheap imitation. Eternal values versus materialism and short-term pleasure.

## **Respect for Legitimate Authority**

To have and show respect for those in positions of legitimate authority: Parents, church leaders, teachers, law enforcement personnel. To show respect for the elderly.

## **Obedience**

To conquer the will without breaking the spirit. Obedience is learned when obedience is demanded. The discipline that teaches obedience must be done in love, not harshly. Excessively harsh discipline produces rebellion or a broken spirit. (Ephesians 6:4)

## **Responsibility**

To accept and fulfill responsibilities. Teach responsibility by giving responsibility. Teach responsibility by being responsible.

## **Self-Discipline**

Self-discipline is learned from externally applied discipline. It must be learned. It never comes naturally. One of the very best things you can give your children is the self-discipline they need to be able to develop their talents, skills, and abilities.

## **Diligence, Determination, Perseverance**

The will to succeed. I won't quit. To keep at it until they reach their goals or desires.

<b>Some Life-truths Parents Want to Teach Their Children</b>
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**Sometimes you get what you want and sometimes you don't.** You can't give your children everything. Some things are mutually exclusive - If you do this, you can't do that. Some things are outside your budget.

**Choices have consequences.** Some choices have life-shaping consequences and should be taken more



seriously. These choices often seem small at the time but set in motion a series of things that will forever set a direction for one's life.

**Words can hurt or heal.** You begin choosing very early in life how you will use the incredible power of words: To encourage or criticize, to bless or curse, to thank or complain. Children learn this first and foremost from parents.

**Your rights end where another's rights begin.** True freedom carries with it the responsibility to protect and defend the freedom of others. Respect others rights to their opinion, respect others property rights, respect others space.

**There's no free lunch.** Everything costs somebody something. What costs you nothing, you value lightly.

**God created you with a unique mix of strengths and weaknesses.** Identify areas of strength and creativity. There is something you can do well. There is something you can do to make the world better. Find it! Do it!

**Mistakes are inevitable but not insurmountable.** A mistake is simply evidence that you tried to do something. Avoid making the same mistakes twice. Don't give up. You're not a failure because you failed; you're only a failure if you quit!

<b>NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF REPENTANCE!</b>
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### **QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION**

#### *Chapter 14    Christian Family 4: Parents' Responsibility to Children*

1. Discuss some of the ways that parents can "impress" (See Deuteronomy 6:7) the ways of God on the lives of their children. Also, what are some ways that parents can give their children a good taste for the ways of God?
2. What are some of the differences between discipline and punishment? Think about what the possible long-term results of both discipline and punishment will be on the life of a child and the relationship between the parent and child. What are some of these results? How can parents ensure that they maximize good results and minimize bad results?