

Strengthening Your Marriage Seminar Raising Children (Session # 7)

The present day world system puts little value on children. Many countries allow them to be used for slave labor and many more literally trash babies after elective abortions. The Scriptures teach, however, that they are God's gifts and of incalculable value (Ps. 127:3-5; Mal. 2:15, Matt. 16:26).

All aspects of marriage are to bring glory to God (1Cor. 10:31). We glorify God by raising our children to glorify God! The heart of Christian upbringing is to bring the heart of the child to the heart of the Savior. This entails the initial experience of salvation (justification) and the ongoing process of sanctification (Rom. 5: 1; 1 Thess. 4:3). Parents should focus on allowing God to use them to change the child's heart, not simply the behavior (1Sam. 16:7; Provo 4:23). Behavior modification by psychological means, drugs, etc. only affect the outer person, they don't change the heart of the child (Jer. 31:33; Co!. 3:8-10).

The responsibility to raise children in the fear and nurture of the Lord is the parents' primary task (Deut. 6:4-9). No aspect is to be delegated to the school, state, church, or others unless it is consistent with God's design and purpose. The training must be multi-faceted and consistent (Prov. 1:7-8, 10, 3:1,4:1,9:10, 13:1,24, 17:25, 19:18,20:11,22:6,23:13,29:15,25,30:17).

Paul the apostle gives a command to children to obey their parents in Ephesians 6:1 and Col. 3:20. The command is in the present tense, so it is to be continual and ongoing. It is in the active voice, so they are accountable and responsible to obey. The context of this command is the filling of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:15-21). We are first to be in submission to God (Jas. 4:7), then to one another (Eph. 5:21). Children learn submission to God by being obedient to their parents, for they are God' ordained authority in the children's lives (Ex. 20:12). The Greek word translated obey means to listen, answer, or pay attention (Matt. 8:27; Acts 6:7, 12:13; Rom. 10:16; 2Thess.

1:8; 11:8). Since obedience (hearing, listening to the Gospel) is so critical in salvation, realize the child's struggle to obey is actually a struggle against God and the Gospel (Heb.5:9). It can bring the greatest joy (3Jhn. 4).

The raising of Godly children is impossible apart from the life of Christ (Phil. 4: 13). It requires a life long commitment and the unity of "one flesh." Do all in love and He will supply your needs (1Pet. 4:8, Phil. 4:19).