

The Christian Home - Part 3  
**CHILDREN AND FATHERS**  
Colossians 3:20-21

**Intro:** Isn't it interesting that the Apostle Paul had time for a word to children? In this, and in many other ways, He was like His Lord. You will remember, I hope, that on one occasion people brought their children to the Lord, but the disciples wanted the children to be sent away. Let me read Mark's account of what I am referring to, so that we can see what the Lord did, and what He said about the children. I am reading from Mark 10:13-16:

13 And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.

14 But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

16 And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

When you read these words, you can see that the Lord had a large place in His heart for children. So did Paul, and so should we! One thing I always admired about Dr. Mitchell in the years I had the privilege of working with him. He had a great burden to see children come to Christ. He had released time bus classes. He had children's home Bible classes. And he and Ralph Wecks' father, Charles Wecks, organized Trout Creek Bible Camp on property owned by Mr. Wecks, and children could earn their way to a free week at camp by faithfulness in those other classes, plus a large Sunday School, and doing the memory work that was required of them. Dr. and Mrs. Mitchell had no children of their own, and it seemed as if they adopted everybody else's children in order to make sure that they heard the Gospel. The church can fill the lack that families have if the parents are unsaved, or if they are saved, but not really concerned about the salvation of their children. Lucille and I would say without any hesitation, that we owe a great debt in the Lord to all that was done for our children to help them know the Lord and hide the Word of God in their hearts.

But we can readily see from Colossians and Ephesians, as well as a book like 1 Timothy, that the primary emphasis for the training and evangelization of children is upon the parents and in the home. The church is to

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supplement what the parents are responsible before God to do for their own children. As Christian parents, we can be very thankful for help that is given to our children in churches, or from other family members, or from whoever may be interested in helping our children know the Lord, and to walk with Him, but the main responsibility rests upon us as parents.

The home is to be a place where a husband and wife love each other, and when children come along, they are to be nurtured in the Lord in a home where love reigns. And the love that we are talking about is “the love of God which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit Who is given unto us” (Rom. 5:5). In Ephesians Paul wrote that we fathers are responsible to bring our children up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). “Nurture” means training, “admonition” is warning against departing from the teaching of the Bible. Children are to be taught to obey. They are to obey their parents, and the parents are to be established in the Word, so that the Bible plays a major role in the training of children. But the point that the Apostle Paul was making, and remember that Paul was not married, and so he had no children of his own, but he was directed by the Holy Spirit to teach parents to teach their children obedience. If a child learns this at home in his or her earliest years, it will be the normal thing for them to understand how important it is to obey the Lord. Children need to be taught what they are to do, and what they are not to do. It is both positive and negative teaching, just like the instructions of Scripture are positive and negative. Now why is it so important for children to learn to obey parents who have learned from the Bible what we are to do, and what we are not to do.

I want to take this opportunity today to recommend a book that we all need to understand as thoroughly as we can. It is not a book that you have to buy because, if you have a Bible, you already own it. I am speaking of the book of Proverbs. It is a book that contains what a certain son, Solomon had learned from his father, who was David, and in Proverbs Solomon was passing on to his children what he had received from his father, Now so you can see this for yourself, turn in your Bible with me to the fourth chapter. And follow as I read to you the first thirteen verses of Proverbs 4. (Read Proverbs 4:1-13 with comments.)

So David taught Solomon, and Solomon was writing this for his children. David taught Solomon, and Solomon taught his children. And the idea is that Solomon’s children were to teach their children, and on would go this

wonderful teaching from one generation to the next generation.

But why is all of this teaching so necessary? Well, the answer to that question is found all through the Bible. But let me give you some specific verses. One verse is Psalm 58:3:

3 The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

This verse is a commentary on human nature, and it goes beyond telling lies. Psalm 58 was written by King David, Solomon's father, and David was declaring a truth that applies to every human being, and it is true not only of lying, but of all sin. You and I know that we have all told lies. And the amazing thing about lying is that no one had to teach us to lie. We did it without being taught to lie. We are liars by nature.

When David committed those two terrible sins, the first of adultery with Bathsheba, and then the murder of her husband, Uriah, to try to cover up what he had done. In one of his psalms of confession, Psalm 51, you will find these words in verses 3 through 5:

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me (Psalm 51:3-5).

What David meant by these words that he was born a sinner. And that terrible fact is true of every one of us. No one ever had to teach us to sin. Now we may have had friends who tried to get us to do the wrong thing, but we all were born sinners. And this means that we all by nature are inclined to do what is wrong. And if there are sins that we have not committed, it is only because of God's grace. I hate to think about what I might be, and where I might be, if the Lord had not intervened in my life by drawing me to Christ. There is an old story that has been told over and over again. I think it is attributed to Dwight L. Moody. He is reported to have seen a drunken bum staggering down the street, and he said to his friend who was walking with him, "There go I, but for the grace of God."

The most godly woman in the world today, whoever she might be, and I use a woman instead of a man, because I'm inclined to think of women as better than men, but the most godly woman on earth today, was born a sinner, and has needed a Savior. Now the reason that fathers need to

teach their children is because, if they don't, their children will go through life always doing the wrong thing, and always making the wrong decisions.

Now all of us got our start in this world as children. We all have had a father and a mother. If you have a father who knows the Lord, or have had a father who knows the Lord, you have one big reason to thank God every day that you live for His goodness to you. I don't think my Dad was saved more than a year or two before I was born. But I remember the night that I went forward at the close of a church service to receive Christ because I had been taught that that is what we are supposed to do. But when I got home that night, my Dad sat me down and went over the Gospel with me very carefully because he wanted to make as sure as he could that I really understood my need, and how only Christ could save me from the penalty of my sins. My Dad taught me that I had to obey him. And what he always wanted me to do was to obey the Lord in all things. I didn't always do the right thing, but I could never blame my Dad for that.

Let us go back to Solomon. Do you remember that the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream as he became king of Israel, and asked him what he wanted the Lord to give to him. Let me read it to you from 1 Kings 3 how Solomon answered him, and I want you to see how Solomon's father, King David, was brought into God's dealings with Solomon. Follow the reading in your Bible if you want to. All of this is in 1 Kings 3:3-10;

3 And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.

4 And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar.

5 In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

6 And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

7 And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.

8 And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast

chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

9 Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

We as parents are to teach our children right and wrong. And the way we know the difference is because God has written a lot of it in our hearts. But we keep learning all of lives from our Bibles, which is the unchanging revelation from God and about God – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

The world tells us today that truth is relative, that there are no absolutes – that there is no such thing as absolute truth. If you believe that, it will take you straight to hell. Sin is sin. It always has been sin, and it always will be sin. The Bible doesn't waver at all on that. Children, listen to your parents who want you to learn the truth of God. Obey them because if they are teaching you the Bible, you can't go wrong. Oh, you may fail. We all do. But when we get back to the teaching godly parents have given us (because godly mothers stand right beside godly father in seeking to teach their children the truth of God), the joy of the Lord will return to our hearts, and we can go on learning from Scripture what our parents have taught us until that wonderful day when our faith will be turned to sight when we see our Lord face to face.

But Paul issued a warning to us as fathers, a gentle warning, and an important one. As husbands, we are to be loving and never bitter against our wives (and our children will know the difference), so let us be patient with our children so that we won't push them to hard, causing them to get angry with us, and become discouraged. Fathers, remember how the Lord has had to be very patient with us when we have been either rebellious or weak, or both. Let us teach and love and be patient with our families, causing us, when we see their needs, to look also at our own, and then give ourselves to more prayer. Our families should be the first ones we bring to the Lord each day as in prayer we seek the blessing of the Lord.

In closing, let me advise us all to give time every day to the book of Proverbs. It is a book for young and old alike. I want to close my message today by reading the first nine verses of Proverbs 1, They tell us

what to expect in the chapters that follow. Listen carefully to these words before I close with prayer:

1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel;

2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;

3 To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;

4 To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

6 To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

8 My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

9 For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck (Proverbs 1:1-9).