

# Treat the Children with Care

## Ephesians 6:1-4

### Intro

Parenthood can be overwhelming sometimes. But we must confess that our lives are profoundly shaped by our parents. The first quarter of our lives is spent under the care and upbringing of our parents. It is there that our character, our mindset and our values are formed and shaped.

In those crucial years our lives are tremendously influenced by our parents. Often those years will determine our lives – who we are and what we are and do.

A child's development is dramatically impacted by loving care, or its absence, in the early years. Treated with nurturing, tender, caring love, the child develops a conscience and character during these early years. In the absence of such loving care, great damage can be done, even to the point of developing a delinquent or criminal with lack of a conscience and moral values.

### Example

Psychologists, Stanton Samenow, and Samuel Yochelson, were convinced that crime was caused by the environment, and they set out to prove their point. They began a 17 year study involving thousands of hours of clinical testing of 250 inmates in the District of Columbia, U.S. To their astonishment, they discovered that the cause of crime cannot be traced to environment, poverty, or oppression. Instead, crime is the result of individuals making, as they put it, wrong moral choices.

In their work they concluded that the answer to crime is a "conversion of the wrong-doer to a more responsible lifestyle."

Harvard professors James Q. Wilson and Richard J. Herrnstein came to similar conclusions in their book entitled, *Crime and Human Nature*. They determined that the cause of crime is a lack of proper moral training among young people during the morally formative years, particularly ages one to six. (Source: *Christianity Today*, August 16, 1993).

As parents we need to realize the great significant role we play in the lives of our children. We need to be ever so careful as to give the right input, instruction, and example into our children's lives.

There's an old Spanish proverb that says, "*An ounce of mother is worth a ton of priest.*"

In a sense we as parents are like potters giving shape and form to our pliable children who look to us for guidance, direction and role models.

As parents and grandparents we sometimes underestimate the powerful influence that we have over our children and grandchildren.

### Examples

1. Billy Graham's parents were both committed Christians. Although Billy Graham's father was a businessman, his father had at one time felt a desire to preach. But it was never meant to be. After Billy entered the ministry, his father said, "I prayed for years for a way to be opened. But never once was there the slightest encouragement from God. My heart burned and I wondered why God did not answer my prayer. Now I feel I have the answer. I believe that my part was to raise a son to be a preacher." Imagine the joy that brought to him and to his wife.

2. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the first African Secretary General of the United Nations, has more than a passing interest in politics. His grandfather, Boutros Ghali, the only Christian prime minister of Egypt,

was shot by an assassin in 1910. Cairo crowds hailed his Moslem killer, but the family did not intend anyone to forget the grandfather. They adopted his given name, Boutros (Peter), and anointed the new grandchild with the same given name. The family then built a church in Cairo to honour the martyred patriarch. "On his tomb were the words 'God is witness that I served my country to the best of my ability,'" says Boutros-Ghali. "For a boy to grow up with such things creates an impact. I felt I would betray the tradition of our family if I didn't play a political role." (Stanley Meisler, *Reader's Digest*.)

These are a few examples of how parents and grandparents have a powerful influence on their children and grandchildren. They shape their minds, and their character.

### **Ephesians 6:4**

The Word of God gives us wholesome positive instruction on how to raise our children.

*"Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."*

*"Do not exasperate"* (KJV says, "Provoke not your children to wrath")

The word "*exasperate*" suggests a repeated, ongoing pattern of treatment that gradually builds up a deep-seated anger and resentment that boils over in outward hostility. It's to irritate or annoy extremely.

Here are a few ways which will help parents not to "*exasperate*" their children and to lead them in the way of the Lord:

#### **1. Love the Father and Mother of My Children**

Jesus said, "*My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you*" (John 15:12). Also we read in Ephesians 5:25, "*Husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.*"

A child needs to know that his father and his mother are lovers. It is the father's responsibility to make the child know that he is deeply in love with the child's mother and vice versa. It helps the child feel secure and loved when he sees the two most important people in his life love each other and support and care for each other.

They need role models of what it means to be a man and a woman in a loving relationship.

#### **2. Give More Attention to My Children**

*"These commandments are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you get up"* (Deut. 6:6-7).

A child needs to be heard and wants a parent's undivided attention. When you listen to your child you are telling them that they are important to you and that you value them. This too helps the child develop good self worth.

#### **3. Seek More Opportunities to Give My Child a Feeling of Belonging**

*"Children are a heritage from the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is His reward"* (Psalm 127:3).

Include your child in family decisions. Plan dates and events where your child is invited to come and participate. Examples: looking for a new house or car, planning a vacation, setting up a family budget, decorating the home, involve them in blessing the meal, reading the Bible at home.

#### **4. Express Words of Appreciation & Encouragement More Often**

*"See to it you do not look down on one of these little ones"* (Matt. 18:10).

Often as parents we tend to discipline and correct our child more than we encourage or show

appreciation to them. The negative treatment of our child only produces negative results. The human spirit needs encouragement and that especially includes children since they are in their formative and impressionable years.

### **5. Spend More Quality Time Together**

*“Making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil”* (Eph. 5:16).

Children have a great need for attention. One of their greatest joys is seeing dad and mom playing with them and doing fun things together. Also putting them to bed and reading bed-time stories and Bible stories and having prayer together.

### **6. Laugh More with My Children**

*“A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones”* (Prov. 17:22).

At times we allow home life to get too serious and we miss out on fun times. Parents need to be silly once in awhile. Play games like hide ‘n seek, tag, skip the rope, playing horsey, board games, see a funny movie, just do fun things etc.

There needs to be more joy in the home!

### **7. The Best Parents are the Ones Who Know God & Trust Him**

*“But let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight, declares the Lord”* (Jer. 9:24).

*“Blessed is the man who trusts the Lord, whose confidence is in Him”* (Jer. 17:7).

### **Conclusion**

In this world of evil and immorality we need parents who have deep spiritual and moral convictions. Fathers and mothers who are good role models for their children and set an example in their homes of what it means to be true believers. We are in desperate need of parents who will lead their loved ones to trust God and serve Him. Yes, the best and most powerful father and mother are the ones who know God, trust God and demonstrate the love of God in their home.

Dr. Rufus Jones (was a Quaker historian, theologian and author) and he often told a story from his childhood. He tells of one day when he was 12 years old, that his mother went to town, leaving him behind on the farm to do some chores. He fully intended to do the work, but his friends' beckonings to play grew too loud. When he saw his mother's car pull into the driveway that evening, his heart sank. He knew he was in for one of the worst whippings of his life. His mother parked the car and came into the house. She looked him straight in the eye. She didn't have to ask him anything.

Rufus said he would always remember what happened next. It affected him as no spanking ever could. His mother took him upstairs into the bedroom, knelt down beside him, wrapped him in her arms, and with tears streaming down her face, prayed one phrase over and over: *“Lord, make a man out of him. Lord, make a man out of him.”* It is said that whenever Jones told that story his voice would grow quiet, his eyes misty, as he remembered that special feeling of *“being in the weeping arms of love.”* (Source: Clergy Journal, April 1993, page 36).

I want to encourage parents (and grandparents) to instill moral and spiritual values in their children. Pray for them and pray with them. Teach them what it means to be in the presence of a loving heavenly Father through prayer. Show them by your example. It's never too late!