

Raising Good Citizens By John Rosemond

Many parents hope their kids will learn to be good citizens when they go to school; others believe that signing them up for a Scouts program will do the trick. What many parents don't realize is that good character is learned in the home. The "3 Rs" of good citizenship -- Respect, Responsibility, and Resourcefulness -- are the bedrock of good character. A solid moral and ethical foundation supports the development of compassion, integrity, commitment, selflessness, and all of the other attributes that constitute the "good neighbor."

Teaching Respect: Respect for others is the linchpin of good citizenship. Instilling a respectful attitude in a child requires that discipline, when necessary, be delivered resolutely, yet calmly; that the child's point of view be taken into account when making family decisions; and that parents' actions be consistent with their words. These actions simply provide what has been called a child's first right, good government.

Teaching Responsibility: A community cannot thrive without citizens who are willing to ask, paraphrasing President John F. Kennedy, not what the community can do for them, but what they can do for the community. Children acquire this sense of social responsibility if they are not overindulged and if they are consistently expected to contribute to their families. Overindulged children never really learn that it's better to give than to receive. Children who aren't expected to perform daily chores are in danger of believing it's possible to get something for nothing. Unfortunately children who don't do chores are usually also overindulged, and vice versa. This combination is devastating to a child's healthy character development.

When it comes to giving to children, parents should be conservative. Hearing the word "no" on a regular basis helps children learn to postpone gratification, tolerate frustration, and set long-term goals, all necessary attributes of good citizenship.

By age four, a child should be performing household chores on a daily basis. As the child grows, those responsibilities should increase so that by the early teen years the child is capable of carrying out just about any task. The more productive a child is within the family, the more productive a citizen the child will become.

Teaching Resourcefulness: This third "R" of good citizenship involves learning to tough it out when it comes to challenge. It was this frontier spirit that made America great, and it is just as important today as 100 years ago.

Parents can help children develop an "I can!" attitude by setting reasonably high goals and then providing the support and encouragement needed to reach those goals.

A second aspect of resourcefulness is imagination. The more opportunities a child has for creative play, the stronger the child's imagination becomes. Parents need to provide plenty of opportunities for free play, and also see to it that the benefits are not canceled out by an excess of television watching, which is an inert and passive activity and does not encourage creativity.

Remember, children don't learn good citizenship skills from baby-sitters, electronic or otherwise, but from their parents.

"If Any Will Not Work, Neither Should He Eat" (2Thes. 3:10)

You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift. You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong. You cannot help little men by tearing down big men. You cannot help the wage earner by pulling down the wage payer. You cannot further brotherhood of man by encouraging class hatred. You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich. You cannot establish sound security on borrowed money. You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than you earn. You cannot build character and courage by taking away men's initiative and independence. You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves.
(Abraham Lincoln)

“Fret Not Thyself”

The little words "fret not" occur three times in the thirty-seventh Psalm, and each time they are followed by that other word, "thyself," showing clearly it is an injury we inflict on ourselves. (For real deliverance from worry, try Phil. 4:6-9)

Psalm 37:1, 7-8 - "Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity... Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret; it only causes harm."

A Renewed Life

Do you feel that your spiritual life is lacking in depth and dedication? Are you displeased with your rate of spiritual development? Any Christian who so desires may experience renewal. The important question is how? Where do I start? Here are some suggestions:

1. Get thoroughly dissatisfied with yourself. Spiritual progress cannot be made until a need for improvement is seen.
2. Carefully determine the areas in your life where you need to make changes and begin now to make them.
3. Do a thorough job of repenting. Let godly sorrow do its healing work. Where sin has been of a public nature, let a public confession be made.
4. Make a definite place in your life for daily worship. Do not neglect prayer and Bible study for any cause. Never be too tired or too busy to spend some time alone with God.
5. Deliberately narrow your interests. You must decide what is most important to this renewed life and invest your time accordingly. There are many activities and projects which use up time and energy but bring you no nearer to God.
6. Begin immediately some definite labor for Christ. Be sure that time is devoted each week to the Lord's work.
7. Trust the Lord. Begin to expect a resurgence of spiritual power and joy.

(James LeFan)

A Moments Wisdom

The attempt to silence a man is the greatest honor you can bestow on him. It means that you recognize his superiority to yourself.

Man prefers to believe what he prefers to be true.

He does not believe that does not live according to his belief.

Blessed is he who does good to others and desires not that others should do good to him.

We cannot hope to spread brotherhood abroad until we practice it at home.