

Raising Children

By Tom Sutherland

Most parents have no problem remembering their children's diaper years. While they were experiencing the diaper-changing, the three AM feedings, and the sleepless nights, the parents never dreamed they would one day look back on those days with longing and fondness, but they do! Why? Because the problems they faced with infant children have been replaced with problems of their adult children.

As the children grow older, the decisions become more difficult, and the moral temptations become oppressive. We wonder and ask, "Will our children stand in way of righteousness"? They grow so fast; they're gone so quickly and, suddenly, one longs for those days when they could calm their children's fears with a kiss or a song or a smile.

To those who have small children, we say, "Don't wish their time away." Take advantage of every opportunity while their souls are still pliable. As you bring your children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, consider these gems from the book of Proverbs: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (22:6). "He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly" (29:15) "The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother" (29:17) "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul" (29:15). "A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the grief of his mother" (10:1). "The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, and he who begets a wise child will delight in him. Let your father and your mother be glad, and let her who bore you rejoice" (23:24-25).

A Teen-Ager's Prayer

Dear Father in heaven, I am young and don't understand what it is like to be a parent, but it must be very hard. I pray you will help Mom and Dad to be good parents, strong in the ways you want them to be. I want to look up to them with admiration and feel confident that their instruction is right.

Help me, dear Lord, to understand my parents. Remind me that, when I don't get my way, it is because they love me and not because they want to be mean or deprive me of a good time. When I become stubborn and refuse to listen, help me, God, to accept the fact that they have wisdom and experience since they were once teen-agers themselves; whereas I have never been a parent.

Put in my heart the respect and consideration they deserve for their years of hard work and sacrifice. They raised me as best they could. Let me not repay them with grief or shame. Rather, help me to give them obedience, respect, forgiveness and love.

Most of all, God, while I still have my parents here on earth, help me to appreciate them and let them know I do.

Blaming

When people blame their parents, siblings, people they work with or for, neighbors or the general social conditions that surround them, they are blaming their environment. Although we are undoubtedly influenced substantially by environmental conditioning, ultimately we cannot blame anything external to ourselves for what we think, say and do. That is, we are who we choose to be. It is doubtful that any person will ever be completely satisfied with what he has done with his life. We may even despise what we have become. But we must not use our past failures or current habits as excuses not to improve. The most important part of moral courage and developing godliness is accepting responsibility for who we are today, so that we can choose a responsible course for the future. (Oscar C. Miles)

Not God

"It is a good thing that we are not God; we do not have to understand God's ways, or the suffering and brokenness and pain that sooner or later come to us all. But we do have to know in the very depths of our being that the ultimate end of the story, no matter how many aeons it takes, is going to be all right" (Madeleine L'Engle).

Religious People are More Intelligent

Some people might contend that religion has no place in the office. But a recent study proves otherwise. It might be to your advantage, the study concludes, if you profess your religious beliefs rather than keep silent about them. Professionals who actively expressed their religious beliefs were perceived to be more intelligent, more trustworthy, more moral and better adjusted than those who did not (Roger Bailey & Philip Doriot via Pulpit Helps).

Re-Defining Poverty

Defining poverty is an interesting business. The Census Bureau reports some thirty nine million poor people in the U.S.A. However, in 1991, 40% of the "poor" owned their own homes! 60% had more than two rooms per person; 60% had air conditioning; 64% own a car; 50% own a microwave; 25% have automatic dishwashers; 91% have color TV sets. This is clearly not what Jesus meant in John 12:8, "For you always have the poor with you..."

God Rules

"I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth... that God governs the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?" (Benjamin Franklin)

A Moments Wisdom

- Leadership is intentional influence.
- Few of us realize that racism is man's gravest threat to man, the maximum of hatred for a minimum of reason, the maximum of cruelty for a minimum of thinking.
- The rewards of heaven are so great and glorious, and Christ's burden is so light, his yoke so easy, that it is a shameless impudence to expect so great glories at a less rate than so little a service, at a lower rate than a holy life.
- The State that undermines the authority of God and rejects the supremacy of the moral order is thereby destroying the strongest supports of its own authority and is on the way to ruin.
- There's small choice in rotten apples.
- Patience is the ability to count down before blasting off.
- No one finds life worth living; he must make it worth living.
- Christ established His church to save sinners, not to serve dinners.
- Nothing sets a person so much out of the devil's reach as humility.
- Some people are like blotters: they soak up everything but get it backwards.
- Nothing is easy to the unwilling.
- Let your conscience be your guide. Let God be your conscience's guide.
- A conscience in good working order keeps you from enjoying many things you shouldn't be doing anyway.
- If your conscience pricks you now and then, you'll know it's on the job.
- Life is like a ladder, every step we take is either up or down.
- With the appearance of the two-bathroom home, Americans forgot how to cooperate. With the appearance of the two-car family, we forgot how to associate. With the coming of the two-television home, we forgot how to communicate.