

Training Children

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"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." — Proverbs 22:6.

Training and teaching are not the same thing. A teacher imparts information and hopes the student will learn it. Parents cannot hope to train their children by merely "telling them." Before mom and dad can really "tell them," the children must be trained to listen and obey.

Most parents do not think they can train their little children. Parents ought to train their children very early in life. Training does not necessarily require that the one trained be capable of reason. Almost any animal can be trained. A lion can be trained to sit and respond or even to jump through a hoop of fire. Dogs can be trained to sit and stay. In our own state of Alaska, people train rats to race with one another.

Cannot a child be trained not to touch? A dog can be trained to come—to stay—to sit and be quiet—or to fetch. While at Sea World near San Diego last year, I watched Orcas jump out of the water and splash water on the spectators. Young men and women rode on some of them while they raced around the pool. Amazing! What is the secret? Training. Show them and run them through the rigors—again and again and again—consistently showing and reinforcing.

Parents who do not train their children can never rebuke and whip them into acceptable behavior. No amount of chastisement can make up for a lack of training. The right kind of training always works with every child. Want miserable and embarrassing circumstances? Don't train your

children and you will have it. Some think they can skip the training and just use the switch or some other means of corporal correction. That alone, will not work. Most times, it ends in what is usually called "child abuse." The liberals in the land call any kind of correction "child abuse," so don't let that intimidate you.

A child needs more than "obedience training," but unless you train him first, discipline alone is not enough. How do you do it? No matter how you were brought up yourself, make yourself do it God's way. Your parents, perhaps did the very best they knew to do, but it may have been far away from God's method. Training -

If you yell at your child—you are training him to respond to yelling.

If you have fit of anger—you are training him to respond to your anger.

If you tell him three or four times before you take action — you are training him to respond at the point when he knows you will take action.

The first thing to do is get his attention. Make him stand still and be quiet so you can tell him what to do. Get a switch. That is a rod from a tree. If he moves after you tell him to stand still, switch him. If he moves again—switch him again. If he turns his head and won't look at you, switch him. Correct him—and train him to be still. Tell him what is to be done.

If he doesn't do what you tell him—switch him. Tell him again.

If he doesn't do it again—switch him again.

Continue until he is trained to obey you.

Why must a child obey you? If you allow him to disobey, you are aiding and abetting his disobedience to God who commanded children to obey their parents in the Lord. Obedience to parents is the first commandment with promise:

Ephesians 6:1-3 *Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.*

Children ought to be taught and trained not to steal—not even a paper clip. If it is not theirs—anything—no matter how small, it is stealing if they take it.

Children need to learn not to kill—don't hurt others.

Do not commit adultery—keep them pure.

Do not covet—things that belong to others are not theirs.

Do not bear false witness—lying.

"We are not under the law," someone objects. The perfect law of liberty, the gospel, has reiterated every single one of the ten commandments with the single exception of the Sabbath. Surely His commandments are not grievous to us as his dear children.

"When he is old," God tells us by the pen of the writer of Proverbs, "he will not depart from it." This scripture is not a promise that the child will become a child of God, but it promises that, if he is trained up in the way he should go, then when he is old, he will be as he was trained.

In other words,

If he is trained to be obedient—he will be obedient.

If he is trained to respect other people's property—he will respect other people's property.

If he is trained to be honest and courteous—he will be honest and courteous.

If he is trained not to lie—he will be a truthful person.

If he is trained not to covet other people's property—he will work for what he gets. He will not be of the modern mindset that the "world owes him a living."

Parents who make a few good rules and enforce them consistently do their children a great service. Number one on the list—the greatest rule, is to obey you—Train them to obey the first time, every time.

Listen to the wisdom of God about rearing children:

Proverbs 13:24 *He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.*

Proverbs 19:18 *Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.*

Proverbs 20:30 *The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: so do stripes the inward parts of the belly.*

Proverbs 23:13-14 *Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.*

*Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul
from hell.*

Proverbs 29:15 *The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a
child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.*