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FROM FULTONDALE CHURCH OF CHRIST...

The Reflector

How To Raise A Heart-ache

By EDWARD O. BRAGWELL, SR

THE rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother. (Prov 29:15)

Though I have been a father for many years and a grandfather for a few years, I still do not claim to be an expert on child-rearing. I am still learning. I do believe that children are getting better. My little angelic grandchildren do not need as many spankings and their parents did. This is not purely a personal judgement on my part. I have talked with other grandparents and they are seeing the same thing in their cases as well.

Seriously, I am concerned about the quality of rearing that today's children are receiving. I am aware of the anguish of heart of many parents over the conduct of their children. I know that this may be in spite of the training given by the parents. I also know that sometimes it is because of the training (or lack of it) given by the parents. I have sat up nights with distraught parents trying to comfort them and make some kind of sense out of the waywardness of their child. (The only thing sadder to me is for such parents to not be concerned at all). Often, as far as it is humanly possible to judge, the parents had done everything that good parents should to guide their children in the proper direction. At times, I have sat as parents agonized, "What went wrong?" Many times there was no fault of the parents that I could see. At other times, I could have told them and often had told them in sermons, in articles, in conversations and in classes — but it seems hardly profitable now to add to their heartache by saying, "I told you so". So, I hold my tongue and try to help

them pick up the pieces.

Hence, these words are not directed to parents who have already done their work (good or bad) of child-rearing. It is directed to those parents who have the bulk of this grave task still facing them. The advice in this article has no guarantee of success in every case because even children are free agents with the power to choose between good and evil. But, I do believe that the Bible teaches some vital principles that have to do with child-rearing that need to be taught and practiced by those who love the Lord and will prevent many of the heartaches that come to parents. The things I will say are from experience and observation over the years, but also based upon the teachings of the Scriptures.

If you want to raise your child to be a heartache then follow these rules:

1. Constantly criticize his symbols of authority. Don't let it be enough to allow your child to have free reigns at home to do as he pleases, if any other authority tries to restrain him, let your child know that you will be his automatic ally in his conflict with that symbol of authority. Every chance you get throw in some critical remark about someone in authority so that your child's big ears will be able to soak it up.

While we need to teach our children that there is no authority that transcends the authority of God, we need to teach them that authority at all levels (including school personnel, baby sitters, Bible class teachers, church leaders, grandparents, etc.) must be respected to have an orderly society and to please God as

Christians. While you, in your maturity may be able to distinguish between the man and the position of authority that he represents, very few children are able to make the distinction. Hence, criticism of a policeman's conduct becomes criticism of law in his mind. Criticism of a teacher is criticism of school discipline in his mind. Criticism of elders, preachers, or Bible class teachers is criticism of divine government in his mind. The person represents the principle to most children. Granted that occasionally some people in positions of authority over your child may abuse



their positions, making it necessary for you to point out that while such abuse is wrong — It still should be the general rule that you praise rather than, criticize those whose position of authority should be respected by your child. In my judgment, even in those cases of abuse it is better to take it up with the person's involved without the knowledge or participation of your child, if at all possible. It is sad that about all some children hear about their school, their country (government), or the church is criticism of work done by the personnel of these institutions. How can we expect them to grow up to respect them?

2. Let society take the blame for his conduct. Let your child know

that you "understand" that he would not have acted the way that he did had it not been for the corrupt society into which you so thoughtlessly caused him to be born. Let him know that he is being constantly victimized by others. Allow him to constantly console himself in the notion that he deserves a better shake in life than society has handed him. Always express your sympathy to him when he complains that "it is just-not fair". Let him know that you believe that it is impossible (or nearly so) to rear a child right in the kind of world we have today. Then he can grow up believing, really believing, that whatever happens to him and what ever he does is just a product of the times in which he is living — rather than the product of his own making. He can then go through life blaming his wife for domestic problems, blaming the church for his spiritual problems, blaming the government for many of his failures and blaming you for the rest of his woes — after all you brought him into this world.

No Christian has ever had an ideal society in which to live and rear children. This is a sinful world. It was sinful in the first century. Christians were told to "become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of Life..." (Phil. 3: 15-16). It was not an impossible task then and it is not now. Parents who were Christians were told to "bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6: 4) in a world filled with ungodliness. (Eph. 4: 17-5: 14). Our children must understand that they are going to have to live godly in spite of society and quit blaming their moral, ethical, or spiritual behavior with its consequences of such upon society.

3. Do not teach your child how to properly use his or her body. Mothers do not teach your child the effect that nakedness or near nakedness has on the opposite sex. Nor the seductive power of "body language" (See Prov. 6:24-25). In fact, when they become of age they will learn the effect and use it to the fullest if you

don't teach them the dangers involved.

One is simply burying his head in the sand if he does not recognize that the sex drive is strong in young people after they reach maturity. One way to protect it to ultimately be used properly in the marriage relationship is to protect the sense of modesty and shame. One cannot allow that sense of shame to be destroyed without weakening the restraints necessary reserve to the body for a husband or a wife. It disturbs me to see parents allow their children (even while very young) to get into the habit of going nearly naked. Though it may be harmless enough in small children — habits can be formed early. It disturbs me further to see parents of teen-agers actually encourage their children to publicly display their bodies in scanty attire (often setting the example for them) or else ignore and/or defend them in their actions. Even if the attire is justified by many in the name of sports and/or recreation, it is still immodest. Still worse parents become quite upset and even hostile in their defense of their children's right to such immodesty without any thing being said by anyone trying to reason with them about the dangers they are exposing themselves to. These same folks seldom offer any real guidance to their children about how to conduct themselves in dating—except "don't get in trouble and cause us embarrassment". Young people need some teaching by their parents as to how to keep from kindling the fire that might eventually burn them. Teach your child to "flee fornication", including actions that lead to fornication if it is allowed to run its full and natural course.

Not every young person who "gets in trouble" is a bad person. Not every one has been neglected in parental guidance. Not every young fornicator gets caught and has to pay the temporal consequences and shame of their actions. Those who escape such consequences are just as much sinners as the others.

Young people are given a far better chance when they have been taught from very early childhood to respect their bodies as given to them of God to be used properly and to become

the temple of the Holy Spirit when they become Christians (I Cor. 6:14-20); and that they are to eventually become the cherished possession of a loving husband or wife (I Cor. 7:2-4). Such modest behavior will probably make one an "odd ball" in modern society, but we have an idea that it will help prepare one for that heavenly society anticipated by Christians.

4. Let him know that you think happiness and success in life depends on outward circumstances. *This has all kinds of potential for heartache. It could cause your child to become a ruthless, ambitious, selfish, driving, social climbing, work-a-holic —thinking that "moving on up is the key to happiness and success. Or it could cause him to become a worthless bum —thinking that poverty and/or becoming a social drop-out will bring him happiness and make*

him a better person.

We need to impress upon our children by precept and example that one's relationship to God is the only thing that can bring eternal happiness and success and that one's station in this life has little to do with it all. If one is right with God, he can learn contentment and happiness regardless to outward conditions (Phil. 4:4ff).

If children constantly hear us equating success with some external condition (A good job, a good house, social acceptance, a vacation home, or even by denying themselves of these things and "escaping the rat race" by going back to the "old ways") they will likely grow up believing it and reacting accordingly.

We must make a determined effort to teach WHATEVER (external) state one is in that he can be happy and content — but even then that happi-

ness in this life is not our real goal, but eternal happiness with the Lord in the next life.

5. Wait until he is grown to teach him how to live righteously and godly. *Let him do what "a Christian should not do" while is young and "not a member of the church" and then when he becomes of age try to put the brakes on his behavior. If anyone questions you about his conduct be sure to answer, "Now, he knows that when he obeys the gospel he can not do those things any more".*

Don't be too surprised when he learns that lesson well and will not obey the gospel because he has learned to love his conduct that you have allowed him to practice "until he becomes a member".

May we ever pray to God for the wisdom to rear our children as we should.

By LEON MAULDIN

From Guardian Of Truth

The Time Has Come

THE time has come when we need to know what the Bible teaches.

For too long the church has been plagued with elders who do not know what the Bible teaches. Men have been appointed who were friendly and "mixed well" with folks (sometimes unfortunately somewhat like politicians). Or, have there not been occasions when, because it was observed that one was successful in his business, it was therefore assumed that he would make a good elder? Obviously the question has not always been, "Does this man whom we are considering for the work of an elder know what the Bible teaches?" (Tit. 1:9) Just think what would happen if elders in every church had a real working knowledge of God's Word. They would be able to apply God's Word to every situation in life as they went about shepherding God's people. Isn't

that God's plan? The time has come when we need elders who know what the Bible teaches!

The time has come when we need preachers who know what the Bible teaches. While topical preaching can be very edifying, there are too many preachers who are unable to take each book of the Bible, and know what its thrust is (theme and purpose, etc.), its major divisions, and give its contents. We need to see the continuity of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. We need to be at home in every part of God's Word. It is easy for preachers to wind up with huge gaps in their Bible knowledge. Disciplined study will cure that.

The time has come when we need Bible class teachers who know what the Bible teaches. If the Bible class teacher does not understand the theme of the Bible, the unfolding of God's plan of redemption, and how God's Word all "fits together"; if he or

she does not understand the context of the lesson text, and how that text fits in with the rest of the Bible, how can the teacher communicate these truths to the students? One cannot teach what he himself does not know,

The time has come when parents need to know what the Bible teaches. This has always been God's plan (Deut. 6:5-7). God has wasted no space in his Word. There is no part of it that we do not need. There is no portion which your children do not need to know, that it might also govern their lives. But how often have we let our children down (and thus let the Lord down) because we as parents have not concerned ourselves enough with the business of knowing what the Bible teaches!

The time has come when we all need to know what the Bible teaches. It is an attainable objective for you to begin with a book of the Bible you are currently studying, and within a mat-

ter of weeks be able to tell what the book is about, its major divisions, and give the content of each chapter (from memory, without consulting notes). You can do that with every book of the Bible, by taking one at a time. It has been a joy to me personally to see brethren of varying ages and occupations, undertake this kind of study. We rejoice to see brethren grow in confidence as they surprise themselves at what they can learn and retain.

Knowledge is never an end in itself. But it is essential. For too long folks have tried "short-cuts" that leave out this vital element. But it is knowing with a view to doing that must be stressed. Only when knowledge is translated into action in our hearts and lives is God pleased. Our objective therefore in knowing what the Bible teaches is that we might be better Christians, and better equipped to serve God. Knowing what the Bible teaches will have the effect of making us better husbands and fathers, and better wives and mothers. It will make us better Bible class teachers, better personal workers, and better preachers. When folks think in terms of qualifying men to serve as elders, immediately the course of action is for the preacher to present lessons on the qualifications of I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. This is important, and more teaching on these texts needs to be done. But developing elders is an ongoing work. When a young man can take a book of the Bible, tell you its contents backward and forward (with an equally intense determination to apply it), is he not on the right track in preparing himself to serve as an elder?

"ONE VERSE ONLY" SALVATION

By Bill Hall via PAUSE-PONDER-PROFIT

The following is an actual Bible discussion between two men searching for truth. Only slight variations exist. We hope that by printing it here we can bring our readers to a better understanding of Bible teaching concerning what to do to be saved.

Joe: The Bible tells exactly what one must do to be saved in Romans 10:9: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

John: Yes, I believe that verse, but

THINK ABOUT IT!

"It has been said that every baseball team could use a man who plays every position perfectly-but there is no way to get him to lay down his hot dog and come out of the grandstand. It probably wouldn't be too difficult to find a man in the bleachers who would have knocked that last pitch out of the park if he had been at bat. But it is easier to talk a perfect game than to play one."

"Every congregation could use men who do everything perfectly who preach without stumbling, who direct singing without a slip, who make announcements without a bobble, and who always teach their Bible classes superbly. But it is impossible to get them to leave the comforts of

their homes on a cold day. Every church could use a man who knows how everything should be done, but it may be very difficult to get them to put down his paper on Lord's day morning or leave television on Wednesday evening so that he can be present to tell us what we ought to do and how to do it. Yes, it is much easier to talk than to demonstrate. The Christian life is a race, and we are to run it, not just sit in the grandstand looking on. (Heb. 12:1) Being critical of others who do run does not entitle us to the prize. Don't waste your life doing nothing but being critical. We need your help, and you need to be in the race. So come on out of the grandstand!!!"

— Copied

Via PAUSE - PONDER - PROFIT

we must not isolate one verse and ignore other passages which give additional information on the subject.

Joe: But other verses confirm this teaching. The thief on the cross and the publican in the temple were both saved in this way. The publican just smote his breast and prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and then went down to his house justified.

John: Did the thief and the publican believe that God had raised Jesus from the dead?

Joe: Of course not, for Jesus had not died.

John: But Romans 10:9 says that one must believe "that God hath raised him from the dead." So, in our acceptance of Romans 10:9 as being applicable to the sinner today, we rule out the thief and the publican as examples of how present day conversions take place.

Joe: I see what you're saying, but I still believe that Romans 10:9 contains the full plan of salvation, for it says "Thou shalt be saved."

John: But Romans 10:9 doesn't

mention repentance. You believe that one must repent, don't you?

Joe: Yes, one must repent to be saved.

John: Then you acknowledge that to learn what one must do to be saved, a person must accept all that the scriptures say on the subject rather than simply rely on one verse, such as Romans 10:9, isolated from the rest of the Bible. But when we study further we learn of a penitent believer, Saul of Tarsus, who was instructed to, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). We conclude therefore, that in addition to doing those things mentioned in Romans 10:9, one must also repent and be baptized to be saved.

We urge our readers to study for themselves. The conversion of the 3,000 (Acts 2:22-41), the Samaritans (Acts 8:5-13), of the Ethiopian (Acts 8:35-39), of the Philippian jailor (Acts 16:25-34) ought to be carefully considered. Observe what each one did to be saved, and "go, and do thou likewise."