

Child Training II *Part 8: Establishing Control*

The two facets of child training, *controlling* and *teaching*, basically parallel the specific stages of a child's development. The *control* aspect of training corresponds to the *child* stage (to age 13), while the *teaching* aspect corresponds to the *youth* stage. A *child* must be *told* what to do; a *youth* needs to be *taught* why to do it.

While children are in the child stage they should be expected to follow the commands of their parents to the letter. This period of development is characterized by the child's immaturity and need for constant restraint. It is the time for maximum external control by the parents, the time of law when a child is to be trained what to do or not to do. Sufficient intense parental pressure will force the child to comply with and to learn to obey these laws. By the time the child reaches *bar mitzvah*, he should be obedient — a son or daughter of the commandments that are now in his or her heart (2 Cor 3:3).

By age 12 or 13, the child should be obedient to and respectful of his parents' right to rule. He should exhibit manners that demonstrate an attitude of respect and honor. The youth now is controlled inwardly by the same Spirit and law that his parents are controlled by (Gal 5:22-23). The youth's self control and discipline should be highly-developed, that is, he should possess a great deal of internal control now with the help of the Spirit, bearing the fruit — the internal control over his own desires (Gal 5:24). Confrontations and conflicts should be all over with now for those who have properly trained their child up in the *Way* they now will go. Now they will begin to be trained anew as a disciple to apply the word of God to their everyday life in the Edah under their parents' guidance. During this youth stage they will still obey their parents, but obedience is without conflict or confrontation and with willing submission rather than forced compliance. This youth period of development is the time when they are to be taught the reasons behind the laws for which they have been held accountable. These reasons are why they should not do something — "*Come, now, and let us reason together*" (Isa 1:18).

When parents exercise control over a child until he can have self-control, they can then be successful in instructing him as a youth. Their success is possible because their child will respect and honor their position of authority and their right to teach him. *No one will accept teaching and instruction from one for whom he has no respect.*

A child who has only been *taught* and not *controlled* will become unteachable later. When he becomes a youth without having been controlled, he is likely to rebel at any attempt to control him. Finally he becomes impossible to control. Attempting only to reason with a young child while being permissive toward his disobedience guarantees lost control. This is a child who cannot become a *bar* or *bat mitzvah* and must leave the Edah.

A child is to be controlled as long as he acts like a child; a child should be taught to the extent that he demonstrates obedience and respect.

Parents have the time *now*, not later, to train their children for *Bar Mitzvah* and adulthood. When the two aspects of controlling and teaching are emphasized in the proper order and wisely administered to the child, parents can produce a well-trained young adult who will build up the Edah.

Control — What does it mean?

Parents can control a child, but to control a 13-year-old youth who has never been controlled or made to obey is almost impossible. So what is child control? What does it mean? The definition of *control* is to hold back, restrain, curb, apply force or pressure by which you exercise parental rulership.

As a parent you have the right to set standards and to administer justice to your children; you have the responsibility and legitimate right to exert pressure on your children. In order for you to gain and maintain control of your child successfully and correctly you need to understand fully what *control* means in application to your children.

Control has three functions: 1) the power to direct — to control a child means to use sufficient force to cause him to follow your directions; 2) the power to restrain — to control a child means to use sufficient force to hold him back from what he would do if left to himself or to his own desires; 3) the power to apply pressure — to control a child means to apply pressure through restrictive rules or standards by which he is tested and judged.

So we can define child control as the use of power, force, and pressure sufficient to cause a child to follow parental directions and to restrain him from doing that which his parents do not want him to do, and to test him against established standards.

Control is Love

Pr 13:24; 29:15; 1 Sam 3:13 — Controls are boundaries for the child, protective boundaries. Children need these boundaries. They are insecure and unhappy without firm, tight hands and guidelines and directions that provide order to their lives and protection from evil spirits. So controlling your child is love. It is a cost that expresses your supreme love and care for your child and his future, and even his eternal destiny and usefulness to his Creator.

True love requires a personal sacrifice. Unwanted children are hard to love. The parents marry to have these *wanted* expressions of their love, and they are willing to take the time — that is, the rest of their life — to raise many wanted and needed children for Yahweh our Elohim. We must then sacrifice our personal time for the sake of the godly offspring God desires from His children.

We must then be ready to monitor closely our children's behavior and be willing to face the inevitable conflict that occurs when the child must be confronted with his disobedience. The sacrifice involved in controlling a child also includes the constant handling of unplanned interruptions into the parents' lives. This is all part of *parenting*. Parents must be more concerned about their child than what they want to do.

Parents must overcome some natural hindrances to applying force before they can effectively control their children. Anyone in authority may be reluctant to apply force to a subordinate because he knows that no one can always be right. Another reason for failing to apply necessary force is that parents may themselves be guilty of rebellion against God or His word to train their child up in the Way of Yahweh. But we all can overcome the hindrance of our lack of perfection by realizing that even though we are imperfect, we have been delegated the responsibility of training our children by God. He knew we were imperfect. This is why He knew we needed His Holy Spirit and His grace to do it. God's plan is not dependent on us being perfect, but on His grace (1 Pet 4:11).

So we must surrender to God's way and His authority over our lives. We must die to our own opinions and commit ourselves to Him and His way. The natural man worships his own opinion and his own way, which prevents him from being what God wants parents in the Edah to be.

Another hindrance to applying force is the parents' fear of rejection by the child and the loss of his love. A child has limited capacity to love anyone but himself. True love is the concern for and the expression of that concern in doing that which is best for the child, which benefits the object of the love.

Can it ever be too late to gain control over a youth? It is easier to control pressure as it builds than to try to cap a full head of steam. The cost to your child for not bringing him under control is more than you would want to pay — or more than you *can* pay.

Control begins when he is an infant, with swaddling clothes. If parents establish control while the child is young, they will be able to maintain that control as he grows older. Control means to be made to respond to the parents' voice and commands (Jn 10:27). As young as possible, new disciples need to be controlled to be able to respond to their shepherd's voice as soon as possible after birth (Jn 14:21; 1 Jn 2:4).

Jn 10:27 — The word *hear* means to heed, obey, like Shaul failed to do in 1 Sam 15:22-23. A child will not naturally and automatically do this unless he is *trained* to hear and obey the voice of the parent. This is what *parent* means, that is, a parent as a father or mother in Heb 12:7-8. A father is not a *parent* any other way; otherwise, the father or mother has *failed* to be a parent, for that means to cause your child to respond as young as possible and as soon as possible (Pr 13:24 — *early, promptly, diligently, without delay*).

This is how to *establish* and then *maintain* parental control. If we have "dedicated" our child, then we *will* establish control and maintain it until its intended purpose has been accomplished or achieved at *Bar Mitzvah*. We will do this if we have *dedicated* our child, if we have not stood before the assembly in pretense in a *ritual*, even as we could have in baptism. But if we were totally *immersed* then we *did* receive and were sealed with the Holy Spirit promised to those who totally *surrender* to His sovereignty in

every way, in every aspect of their personality, including their *will* (Jn 7:17). But unless we start seeing His will and His purpose and who we actually *are* as Eph 1:17-18 says, we will not be able to train or control and teach as Pr 22:6. We personally will fail to do our part to bring about Gen 18:19 as a son of Abraham or a daughter of Sarah.

If we see who we are — His inheritance, the seed of Abraham — we will do our part in fulfilling the promise made to him. This is why we even circumcise our sons (Gen 17:1-8). The outward sign is before his dedication at 40 days. This means as the seed of Abraham he will be “saved” at *Bar Mitzvah* (that is, sealed with the Holy Spirit, Eph 1:13) because we not only circumcised him but we *dedicated* him in reality. This is the father’s pre-determined will to raise him in the way he should go (Pr 22:6; Gen 18:19). He is caused to go in the way of Yahweh, to keep this way.

God has known us in *advance*, as we know our children in advance. Our children were pro-created, *desired* by the parents who loved them in advance of their birth. As we were chosen in advance of our birth, so it is with our children. We were loved in advance and our children were loved in advance. We dedicated them, we circumcised them *already*. They then are already “saved”; they are already the sons and daughters of Abraham. They will become *b’nai* and *b’not mitzvah* and be sealed with the Holy Spirit because we have already circumcised them and already dedicated them. They are already His — that is, if we dedicated them in faith, with the Holy Spirit upon us. If the Holy Spirit was upon us, He will come upon our child so that we can fulfill Gen 18:19.

With this foundation, our children can be commanded to keep the way of Yahweh. This takes *training* — first *control* and then *teaching*. Read Gen 18:19 and 17:7 — this is the covenant parents and their children *are already in*. Gen 17:8 is the promise, as Gen 15:17-18, but this is only *after* Isa 49:6 and Mt 24:14, after we bear the fruit of the kingdom (Mt 21:43). The promise in Mt 19:28 we see as prophecy to be fulfilled (Mt 5:17).

The covenant of Gen 15:18, which sealed the promise, was made on the same day as Abraham’s faith was reckoned to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6). The covenant of circumcision in Gen 17:1-10 was made *after* Abraham’s justification, which point Paul labors in Rom 4:9-12. This circumcision is a work of faith (Jn 6:28-29), that is, the work that we do with the Spirit upon us. Any work we do without the Spirit upon us is *dead works* (2 Cor 5:10).

Gen 12:7; 15:18; 18:19 — The fulfillment of this promise in the millennial kingdom cannot come except we, the twelve tribes, bring it to fruition by His Spirit upon us (Acts 26:6-7) — the resurrection from the dead. This is the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 24:7) — the land grant is the key to all the other promises being fulfilled. Without the land, everything else is in abeyance.

So circumcision and dedication continues the Abrahamic Covenant until its fulfillment — the irrevocable promise of Yahweh as the gospel commands (Gen 12:1-3; Isa 49:6; Gen 18:18-19). Acts 2:38 is the promised Holy Spirit, without which the Abrahamic Covenant cannot be brought to fruition.

Gen 22:12 — “*Now I know... To fear is to hold God in awe* (Gen 22:16-18). The angel in Gen 22:11-12 may not have known beforehand, although God did. But it was not revealed to the angel before Abraham raised the knife and began to lower it to his son’s throat. This is what the angel needed to know, and it is what the holy angels need to know about us. This is the ultimate expression of fearing God, even as Mt 10:37 or Lk 14:26.

Our own children, the “godly offspring He desires,” must be trained up — controlled and protected from all other spirits (e.g., of rebellion, the underground), to keep the *Way* in Ps 1:5-6. There are two ways parents can train their children to go in. If they are the seed of Abraham, they will train them and control them to go in the way of Yahweh, because the seed of Abraham circumcised and dedicated their children.

Gen 18:19 — “*For I have known Abraham*” — this means an intimate relationship in which Yahweh can trust Abraham to do what He said in Gen 18:17-18 through his seed after him (Gen 17:8). Even after 4000 years Yahweh has found a people who are like David (Acts 13:22,36; Isa 53:10). What God saw in David, as in Abraham, was the deep desire to do His will. This desire *never waned or changed*. David was not self-willed; he could do nothing without Him (Jn 15:5).

It is essential for parents to *cause* their child to respond to their word as young as possible and as soon as possible. The child's response should be immediate upon the parents' command. One obvious reason for establishing parental control is to protect your children from imminent danger. A young child can get himself in trouble in a split second. He can dash into the street, reach out for a hot stove, or climb onto a chair before his mother can physically catch him. Requiring the child to respond instantly to the parent's command of "No" could prevent his injury or even his death. It should not be necessary for a child to burn his hand badly or receive other injuries in order to learn the lessons of life. An infant can be taught to respond to his parents' firm command of "No" at a very young age.

A child needs to learn that his disobedience results in receiving his parents' disapproval. The parents' controlled use of pain is not cruel and will not cause the child to fear his parents personally. He will only learn to respect their word and the authority they possess. The child soon learns that the choice is his. If he chooses willfully to ignore the commands, he chooses to receive pain. The minor discomfort a child must experience in order to learn to obey his parents' commands will save him much pain in the future (eternal destiny).

Parents should not hesitate to establish a healthy respect for their authority as soon as the child is capable of doing what is expected of him. The commands "stop" and "come" can be added to a child's vocabulary as obedience words even before he can speak. These words become the external control by which parents can protect the child from danger. The child who learns to respect his parents' word can be directed away from unseen danger throughout his childhood.

When a child can learn to obey the commands of "no," "stop," and "come," he can easily be taught the boundaries of his exploration. He can be taught not to touch such potential dangers as electrical cords, wall sockets, hot items, or fence gates. It is not necessary that he understand why these things are dangerous at this point, but only that it is painful to disobey his parents.

Obedience is not only for the child's protection. It is also the basis for controlling him while he is being taught to conform to the parents' standards set for him. A child needs to learn at the very beginning that it is not his will or wants that will dictate policy in the home, but the will of his parents. Never deal with your child on the basis of his "wants," but rather on the basis of his "needs." Teach your child early in life that you will always respond to what he needs, but that what he wants will probably be denied. Never give a child who is begging for something what he wants. Play down his wants by asking him instead what he needs and by teaching him how to make his needs properly known.

When a child consistently and instantly obeys his parents on command, he has learned the most important standard. In other words, he has learned that his parents are in charge and that their word is law. This fact of life can be taught to children early in life, but it will be challenged time and time again. Every time parents attempt to direct their child against his will or restrict him from what he wants, they should be prepared to re-establish their right to rule.

So establishing parental control and their right to rule should begin when a child is quite young. But what do you do with a child who is several years old when he comes into the Edah? Or even a youth? The principle is still the same. Children or youth must be brought under control before the training process can begin. A child must respect the word of his parents before he can be taught, and before he can respect their word he must first obey their word. Therefore the first stage even for the older ones who come in is to be required to obey their parents' commands instantly, without talking back.