

The Education of our Children

Parental Responsibility

1 Tim 3:4 — Before the public school system, children were educated at home. Children were under the strict control of their parents, parents being the responsible ones to teach their children all the essentials to follow in their father's footsteps and business, industry, whether cottage industry or farming. They were trained up in the way they should go, according to how they were ordained, since it was the responsibility of the parents to detect their gifting, what they were naturally endowed with, to even make the cottage industry or farm greater, carrying on in their parents' place.

As the natural law in Sir¹ 30:1-13 and 7:15-17,23,27-28 says, a wise parent will whip his son often. This is in accord with the standard approach to discipline and education in the past before the spanking stopped. Pr 13:24; 23:13-14 is love to its highest extent for a child's own good to avoid Sheol (Pr 4:10; 15:10; 19:18; 22:15; 20:30). In old Israel, public stoning was provided as a last resort for parents who could not control their children (Dt 21:18-21).

The natural law in Sirach and in the Old Covenant of Israel were comparable (Rom 2:12-16). In Sir 22:6, "chastisement" or thrashing of your child keeps you from trying to teach a fool (verses 7-8). But then John Dewey's and Dr. Spock's philosophy crept in and the spanking stopped. Now all hell is breaking loose.

However, in the days before John Dewey and Dr. Spock came on the scene in America, there was order in the home and even in public schools. Parents taught the history especially of their own nation and their social customs, giving instruction in right living, and preparing their children for adult life. This preparation involved reading, writing, crafts, trades, and household work, home economics, farming, animal husbandry, i.e., beekeeping, etc.

¹ *Sirach* is another name for the book of Ecclesiasticus in the Apocrypha.

Ex 13:8,14; Dt 4:9-10; Pr 1:8; 4:1-9; 31:1 — Parents of Israelite children were commanded by Yahweh to teach their own children what they believed and why they believed it (Dt 6:6-9), and the same command applies today for us (Eph 6:4; 2 Tim 1:5; 3:15), just as in old Israel (Dt 33:10; Ezra 7:6-10; Neh 8:1-4,8).

Teachers and teaching in Israel: Mt 23:2-3; 4:23; Acts 5:34; 22:3; Dt 31:19; Lk 2:46; 19:47; Mt 26:55.

Family

With the ordering of human life God has put it into the nature of man to exercise and accept authority. He has given parents authority over their children, and children by nature look to their parents as their authority figures, recognizing parental authority (Gen 22:7-8; Ex 20:12; Lk 2:51). We learn in the Scriptures not to misuse our parental rights and authority, treating our children unjustly. It also teaches children that they must respect and obey their parents (Eph 6:1-4; Col 3:20-21). But we *never* function in the atmosphere of harsh authority, but on the contrary, in an atmosphere of self-sacrificing love (Tit 2:4; 2 Cor 6:11-13; Eph 5:28).

Parents who love their children will fulfill their duty to instruct and discipline them. But they will have a very hard time doing this, especially in the nucleus, who are coming out of the dust, who were raised wrong themselves, as ill-instructed or ill-disciplined, or not disciplined themselves.

Dt 11:18-19; 2 Sam 7:14-15; Pr 1:8; 13:1,24; 19:18; 29:17; Eph 6:4; 1 Tim 3:2-5; 5:14; Heb 12:7-11

Parents must encourage open communication between themselves and their children (Dt 6:20-25; Josh 4:21-24). If parents act responsibly towards their children they can expect to produce children who act responsibly (Pr 10:1,5; 22:6; 2 Tim 3:14-15). The training that produces this responsibility begins in the children's infancy and is carried out in the home, which is based on the Word of God (Dt 6:1-9; 2 Tim 3:14-15).

The teaching that parents give their children must be supported in the example of the parents' conduct (Rom 2:21-24; 1 Ths 2:10-12). Parents must practice and teach self-sacrifice for the sake of others, for the family is the place they learn how to love, supported by the whole community. They must learn to love others, forgive others, honor others, and serve others (Eph 4:31-32; Mt 20:25-27; Jn 13:12-15).

Parents must train and then teach not to be selfish or self-centered, by the parents' example of hospitality, caring for others. Encourage them to have a generous attitude (1 Jn 3:17) to those in the community (Rom 12:13; 1 Tim 5:10; Jms 1:26-27; Ps 128:1-4; Mk 7:9-13), as with the commonwealth of Israel.

Spanking, discipline, chastisement corporally administered — parents have the responsibility to love their children enough to spank them when they're disobedient, unless the parents themselves are disobedient to their Father in heaven, who commands His sons and daughters, who are parents, to spank their sons and daughters, because they love them (Pr 13:24) and Him (Jn 14:15,21,23), lest they prove to be bastards, illegitimate sons themselves (Heb 12:7-9), not having a father who disciplines them.

Pr 13:24 is not punishment, but discipline or chastisement. Parents who do not have illegitimate bastard children, will love them and will not ignore their sin and wrongdoing (Heb 12:6-9; 2 Sam 7:14-15; Ps 89:26-33). Chastisement is both the penalty for wrongdoing and it is training (Pr 22:6). Discipline is training and raising them up in the right way, training a child to avoid what is wrong (sin) and to do what is right (Jms 4:17), developing a pattern in their life that is useful to our Father in heaven. Parents raise their children after dedication for our Father's purpose (Mt 6:9-11; Pr 13:24; 22:15; 23:14; 29:15).

Parents, when spanking their child, should act with proper understanding and not in anger (Eph 6:4). As parents correct and train their children, so does their Father in heaven discipline them. Such discipline is proof to them and the child that they are loved and are not bastards (Dt 8:5; Pr 3:11; Heb 12:5-11; Rev 3:19).

Our Father's purpose for disciplining His children is to correct their errors and faults and rebellion, before they go over the waterfall into the river of no return, and to teach them obedience to make them into the people He desires to use for His will to be done on earth (Ps 94:12; 1 Cor 11:32).

Concerning our children, our Father's purpose for marriage is that the husband and wife would produce offspring, godly children, and build a secure and contented family. Godliness with contentment is great gain. It will go well with them. Godly people regard their wanted children as a gift from God, and aim to bring them up to know Him to fulfill their created purpose and walk in His ways (Dt 6:6-9; Ps 127:3; Eph 6:24; 2 Tim 3:15).