



Shade for Our Children

(Part one of two)

Today is Children's Day. Children are god's blessing and a heritage. But as we progress in our earthly pilgrimage towards the days of anti-Christ, how prepared are our next generation to STAND Alone for Christ? What kind of legacy are we leaving our children? In this issue and the next, we explore the points mentioned in a John MacArthur's sermon. Sister Poh Yok has painstakingly and patiently transcribed and summarized the message. In today's issue, we will examine the first two sections as published below. JK

This is a very powerful message to parents. It not only touches on biblical principles of parenting but also highlights the pitfalls of parenting and why we fail as parents. The message revolves around Ephesians 6:1 - 4.

It starts with reference to an old Chinese proverb: "One generation plants the trees and another gets the shade"

One generation plants the trees and another gets the shade

This is a very apt description of the impact of parenting on our future generations. When we deliberate on parenting issues, do we reflect on how our parents and grandparents brought us up and how we still carry with us their teachings? We are still living in the shade of some trees that were planted by our parents and our grandparents and our great grandparents. We are shaded to some degree by their moral standards, their spirit of commitment, their value system, their sense of right and wrong and their commitment to duty. We are shaded by what our parents and grandparents planted.

What kinds of trees are we planting today to shade the future generations? Are we planting anything or are we leaving our children totally exposed to the temptations of the world? It is clear that our culture with regards to values, morals, ethics and commitments have disintegrated. The very system that we based our lives on is out of sync with God's divine order.

What kind of morality, what kind of standards are we going to embrace to shade the next generation?

For the purpose of the Lively Stones publication, this message will be divided into 4 sections:

- Children are meant to be a blessing from God
- How to raise that child right
- Biblical Principles of Parenting
- The rights and wrongs of parenting

Children are meant to be a blessing from God

They are meant to be a joy, a benediction from the Lord to grace our lives with fulfilment, meaning, happiness and satisfaction. They are given for our joy and yet they turn out to be heartbreak upon heartbreak. Without the shade and protection, they will indeed break our hearts.

It is important at this point to look at some bible references that

point out the purpose of children in our lives. John MacArthur refers to Prov 23:24; 27:11 and 29:3 to reiterate the point that children are to be a blessing from God. That's God's purpose. Children are to make us happy.

Let's think about this. How is it that with God's purpose that children are to bring us joy and happiness, contentment, satisfaction and love but instead they end up becoming a heartbreak?

Interestingly, the Houston Police Department published a tiny booklet entitled "How to ruin your children". It is guaranteed (jokingly!) to be 99% infallible and was based on their experience in dealing with delinquents and criminals.

Here are five points to begin with:-

1. Begin in infancy and give the child everything he wants.
2. When he picks up bad words, laugh at him.
3. Never give him any spiritual training until he is 21 and then let him decide for himself.
4. Avoid using the word 'wrong' it may develop guilt feelings.
5. Pick up everything he leaves around so he will be experienced in throwing all responsibility for everything on others.

Even the world sees that a child without discipline and instruction is a potential disaster ...

Then there is the medical doctor who suggested sarcastically how to create a tragic child. He wrote on 'How to develop your normal healthy baby into a drug addict or an alcoholic.'

1. Spoil him. Give him everything he wants if you can afford it.
2. When he does wrong, you may nag him but never spoil him.
3. Foster his total dependence on you so that alcohol or drugs can replace you when he is older.
4. Protect him from your husband and all those mean teachers who threaten to spank him and discipline him from time to time and sue them if you wish.
5. Make all his decisions for him since you are much wiser and older than him and he might mistakes and learn from them if you don't.
6. Criticise his father in front of him so that your son may lose his own self respect and confidence.

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7. Always bail him out of trouble so that he will like you. He might harm your reputation if he gets a police record. Never let him suffer the consequences of his own misbehaviour.
8. Always step in and solve his problems for him so he can depend on you and run to you when the going gets tough. Then when he is older and still hasn't learnt to solve his own problems he will continue to run from them, through drugs or alcohol.
9. Just to play it safe, you have to dominate your husband and drive him to drink too.
10. Take a lot of prescription drug so that taking non-prescription drug won't be a major step for him.

The list also includes developing the child to a homosexual, obsessive child, accident-prone child, obese child among others.

The point in all these is that God has given us children and unless we obey God's standards, we will produce a disaster. It is clear from the Bible that unless you obey the standards that God has left down, that child will turn out to break your heart...

How to raise that child right

In Eph 6: 1, children are called to obey and honour their parents. To obey is the act and to honour is the attitude. What we want out of children is obedience and honour. They need to learn attitudinally to honour their parents and in terms of action, to obey their parents. John MacArthur stresses this many times that children do not know how to do this naturally.

They need to be taught.

The Minnesota Crime Commission acknowledges this - "Every baby starts life as a little savage. He is completely selfish and self centred. He wants what he wants when he wants it - his mother, his mother's attention You deny him these things once and he seizes with rage and aggressiveness which would be murderous were he not so helpless. He is dirty and has no morals ... Doesn't know anything and has no developed skills. Sounds like a bum on skid row! This means that all children are born delinquent. If permitted to continue in their self centred world of infancy, given free rein to their repulsive action to satisfy each one, every child will grow up a criminal, a thief, a killer, a rapist."

Children develop in 4 areas

Luke 2:52 tells us that Jesus grew in wisdom, stature, favour with God and men. In wisdom referring to mentally, in stature, to grow physically, in favour with God is our spiritual relationship with the Lord and in favour with men refers to our social development.

When children came into the world, they are undeveloped. They have to be taught to obey for this is right and God gave His commandment and put a promise in it for long life (Eph 6:3). If they would have the right attitude, honour means the spirit of obedience... obedience means the act of obedience. They are to honour their parents which means that they have such respect for them they **want to do what is right** and **then they do what is right**. They are not able to do it automatically. **They have to be trained** to do that.

The key is the Lord Jesus Christ and a spirit-filled life even for a child. Children need to be under the control of the Holy Spirit but they need to be taught that by their parents. We have a

tremendous task at hand. If you don't teach your children to honour and obey you, they will break your heart. Teaching them to have a spirit filled life is absolutely essential.

Proverbs 19:18 gives us very clear instructions on teaching our children. **Chasten thy son while there is hope** Because there's going to come a time when there is no hope, where you can't do discipline him anymore. When your son gets too old and you try to hit him with a rod, he will break it over your head..... If you don't discipline him while there is still hope, you are desiring his death. What do we mean by that? He will grow up to be of the world, to live like the world and have a life that is so totally against what the Lord has planned for him, a life that will destroy him at the end. You have to discipline your son while there is hope, when he is still within your reach and control. The alternative to this is to desire his death.

The rod of discipline

John MacArthur advocates that corporal punishment is the consequence for disobedience which modifies behaviour. Painful immediate consequence alters behaviour.

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." You are not just saving his life but his soul, his whole person when you use that rod.

Proverbs 29: 17

Correct your son and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

The bible categorically states that if you correct him with a rod and discipline him or her and make them live an obedient life, they will delight your soul. **Set a standard, live by that standard and correct to that standard.** And they will give you comfort. In your old age, they will support you, love you and call you blessed and delight your soul. If you don't do that, what will happen?

In the book of Proverbs, it says that if you don't do this, if you don't discipline your child and raise your child properly, he will be a grief to his mother, a rebel to his father, a sorrow to his father, a disaster to his father, a disgrace to his parents, a humiliation to his parents, a user of his parents.

Proverbs 29:15

"The rod and reproof give wisdom, but the child that left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." This means that a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother. He will shame you and an embarrassment to you. John MacArthur says that if you want this kind of child, then don't do anything. But if you discipline your child right, **set a standard, live the standard and discipline according to the standard**, your children will love you, delight in you and comfort your heart.

We have a tremendous gift from God in our children. They are supposed to be a blessing and a joy to us. But for some people, their children are a pain and a disaster. Their children have a lack of values and honour and regard for their parents, some terrorise their parents, manipulate and monopolise their home. That's not what God had intended. How do you take the little savage, cute and cuddly though he is, and guarantee that this one will be a joy to you?