

I Speak As Unto My Children

Introduction. The Bible occasionally contains passages where we can find dual applications. An example of this would be in Ephesians 5:22-32 where Paul teaches about Christ and the church and about the relationship of husbands and wives. I believe a similar passage is found in 2 Corinthians 6:11-18 where Paul makes several comments to the Corinthians where he acts toward them as a spiritual father.

In 2 Corinthians 6:13, Paul said, "I speak as unto my children" which obviously shows the concern and love Paul had for them. In this text we can find several instructions that are worthy of study and would benefit the children that God has blessed us with.

We all naturally want our children to listen and to be holy. He exhorts them to "enlarge their heart" meaning that they should have an open mind to the instruction he is about to give. He goes on in vss. 14-18 and warns them against having fellowship with evil. God would be with the Corinthians if they abstained from sin. He then proceeded with his discussion from which we will take the five following necessities in teaching our children.

I. ***We Need Teach Children The Necessity Of Independence***

- A. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 7:1 that we must "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."
- B. Children must learn that they have to do some things for themselves. Just as the Corinthians had to "cleanse themselves," so our children must learn to do the same. Unfortunately, parents cannot stand for their children all their lives.
- C. Rather than coddling them well beyond their years, we ought to be teaching them how to stand on their own two feet in regards to truth (Ephesians 4:14). We cannot believe for them, nor can we act righteously for them; they must do that on their own (Job 11:15; 1 Corinthians 15:58; 16:13).
- D. It is wonderful to behold children who obey Christ because of the godly example of their parents (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:15). But they must not remain faithful because of their parents; they must remain faithful because their faith is grower deeper.
- E. Being independent means that our children must get rid of excuses and rationalizations for doing what is wrong and act righteously. If they do not learn how to be independent, they will not have a firm foundation to avoid sin later in life and will cause themselves, their parents and the church untold misery.

II. ***We Need Teach Children The Necessity Of Togetherness***

- A. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 7:2-3 that the Corinthians were in his heart to die together and to live together. Paul was with the Corinthians for eighteen months (Acts 18:11).
- B. Parents and children need to be together. There is simply no other way to fulfill the obligation in Ephesians 6:4 without being together.
- C. Hebrews 10:24-25 instructs the church that it needs to spend time with one another. One of the reasons of worship is for the purpose of building one another up (Acts 11:23). To a child, love spells T-I-M-E, not M-O-N-E-Y. When children understand that you will face anything with them together, it is easier for children to understand the need of parental authority for a common good.
- D. Lois, Eunice and Timothy are good examples of the need of togetherness. That young man would not have been who he was had it not have been for relatives who were willing to spend time with him and teach him (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15).

III. ***We Need Teach Children The Necessity Of Communication***

- A. In 2 Corinthians 7:4-7, Paul emphasized the comfort that he received when Titus arrived and told him of the longing, mourning and zeal the Corinthians had for him.
- B. The only way to build trust and teach is to communicate. We need to communicate to our children the ways of God and of the world before they learn the wrong way from their friends at school (Deuteronomy 6:3-9).
- C. Children need to be taught, but that is awfully hard to do when they come home, go to their room and turn on the stereo or when they eat dinner with their eyes glued to the television. Turn them off and teach your children something worthwhile:
 - 1. We need to teach our children how to worship in spirit and truth (Hebrews 11:4; John 4:24).
 - 2. We need to teach our children to seek God's kingdom first (Matthew 6:33; Joshua 24:15).
 - 3. We need to teach our children to maintain moral purity (2 Timothy 2:22; Hebrews 11:24-26).
 - 4. We need to teach our children to marry someone who will encourage their spirituality (Matthew 6:24; 1 Peter 3:1-7; 1 Kings 21:25).
 - 5. We need to teach our children to assume responsibility for their choices and actions (Matthew 27:24; 1 Timothy 5:8).
- D. There is perhaps no greater example than the instruction David gave Solomon in 1 Chronicles 28:9-10 before his death. We need

to be reiterating this type of instruction on a regular basis so we can win the battle for our children's minds.

IV. ***We Need Teach Children The Necessity Of Forgiveness***

- A. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 7:8-10 about the true nature of repentance in reference to his "severe letter" which he had previously sent.
- B. Children must learn to be humble and say they are sorry. They must do this because they will one day have to tell Jesus they are sorry for their sins (Acts 8:22). If they never learn humility and are never impressed with the consequences of bad behavior, they will not learn to seek forgiveness (Isaiah 55:6).
- C. When children learn about forgiveness, they must of necessity learn other important truths as well.
 - 1. They must learn that repentance means to turn away from sins and be converted to walking in a path of righteous behavior (Acts 3:19).
 - 2. They must learn that confession means to speak the same thing as God concerning a certain subject, whether it be a confession of faith (Matthew 10:32-33), or a confession of sins (1 John 1:9).
 - 3. They must learn to forgive and be forbearing with others, even if they have acted with great wickedness (Matthew 6:14-15).
- D. Jacob, Joseph and his brothers all give us a wonderful example of forgiveness (Genesis 50:15-21).

V. ***We Need Teach Children The Necessity Of Discipline***

- A. Paul's comments in 2 Corinthians 7:11-12 suggest that the Corinthians had responded very favorably in light of spiritual truth and in light of the visit of Titus. They understood that they must be disciplined enough to remove the tendencies toward falsehood.
- B. Discipline is required by God (Proverbs 13:24) and it produces great benefits (Proverbs 22:15; Hebrews 12:11). Children also need to learn that as they grow up and obey the gospel of Christ, they will be subject to the discipline of the church (1 Corinthians 5:5, 13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14).
- C. It never ceases to amaze me to see parents who are afraid to discipline their children because they are afraid that their children will hate them. They want to be "pals" with their children so badly. So you end up with teenagers who rule the house, not the parents.
- D. Eli's household was brought to ruins because he failed to discipline his children (1 Samuel 3:10-14). Let's make sure that we don't

make the same mistake.

Conclusion. In 2 Corinthians 7:13-16, Paul had great expectations and confidence in the Corinthians because of all these things. I believe likewise that if we teach our children these five important truths, we can have great expectations and confidence in them too.