

“I Speak As Unto My Children”

Introduction. The Bible occasionally contains passages of dual application. 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. A similar passage is 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 Paul’s concern and love. In this text we can find several instructions that will benefit the children with which God has blessed us (Psalm 127:3-4).

He exhorts them to “enlarge their heart” meaning that they should have an open mind to his instruction. 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. His discussion in 2 Corinthians 7 reveals five necessities we need to teach 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 for themselves. Just as the Corinthians had to “cleanse themselves,” so our children must learn to do the same.
- C. Rather than coddling and sheltering them well beyond their years, we ought to teach them how to stand on their own two feet regarding truth (Ephesians 4:14).
 1. Coddling and sheltering works against them, for 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).
 - a) It is wonderful to behold children who obey Christ because of the godly example of their parents (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:15).
 - b) But they must not remain faithful because of their parents; they must remain faithful because their faith grows deeper (2 Peter 1:5).
 2. They must learn to get rid of excuses and rationalizations and take responsibility for their choices and actions (Matthew 27:24; 1 Timothy 5:8).
- D. A firm foundation will help our children to avoid sin later in life and will thereby allow their parents and the church to avoid great 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. He obviously grew very close to them during his long stay (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. How do you suppose Lois and Eunice were able to teach Timothy (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15)?
 - 1. Christians receive tremendous strength by assembling together (Acts 11:23; Hebrews 10:24-25). The same is true with children: love spells T-I-M-E, not M-O-N-E-Y.
 - 2. When children understand that you will face anything with them together, it is easier for them to understand the need of parental authority.
- C. Although the Israelites had God with them, they rebelled, setting a poor example (Joshua 24:8; Isaiah 1:2; 1 Corinthians 10:11)..

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 their longing, mourning and zeal.
- 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 (Deuteronomy 6:6-9, 17).
- C. Children need to be taught, but that is hard to do when they come home and sequester themselves in their room or when they eat dinner with their eyes glued to the television. Teach your children something worthwhile:
 - 1. Teach them to seek God's kingdom first (Matthew 6:33; Joshua 24:15).
 - 2. Teach them how to worship God in spirit and truth (Hebrews 11:4; John 4:24).
 - 3. Teach them to maintain moral purity (2 Timothy 2:22; Hebrews 11:24-26).
 - 4. Teach them to marry someone who will provoke spirituality (Matthew 6:24; 1 Peter 3:1-7; cf. 1 Kings 21:25).
- D. There is perhaps no greater example than what David told Solomon before his death (1 Chronicles 28:9-10).

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. 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 sin and be converted to walking a righteous path (Acts 3:19).
 2. They must learn that confession means to agree with God, whether it be a confession of faith (Matthew 10:32-33), or a confession of sins (1 John 1:9; Acts 8:22).
 3. They must learn to forgive and be forbearing with others, even if they have acted with great wickedness (Matthew 6:14-15; Ephesians 4:31-32).
- D. Can we teach our children to forgive others like Joseph forgave his brothers (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 to the truth 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 and produces great benefits (Proverbs 13:24; 22:15; Hebrews 12:11).
 1. Some parents refuse to discipline their children because they are afraid that their children will hate them.
 2. They want to be "pals" with them so badly that they end up with teenagers who rule the house!
- C. Children also need to learn that as they obey the gospel of Christ, they will be subject to church discipline if they sin and refuse to repent (1 Corinthians 5:5, 13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14).
- D. Eli's household was brought to ruins because he failed to discipline his children (1 Samuel 3:10-14).

Conclusion. In 2 Corinthians 7:13-16, Paul expressed his great expectations of and confidence in the Corinthians. Likewise, if we teach our children these five important truths, we can have great expectations of and confidence in them too.