

The Responsibilities Of Children

Introduction. The first recorded command which appears in the Bible and is directed toward newly formed humanity has reference to children (Genesis 1:26-28). This command includes the conception, birth, and rearing of children. Children are frequently conceived and born when there is no marriage relationship between the father and mother but these circumstances are a violation of God's will and a staggering blow to the future of our society. The child will bear the reproach and the fault lies with the two who conceived the child.

Children who are not reared well can be a source of incredible suffering and heavy heartache not only to their parents but to themselves. Some of the saddest Christians you speak to are those whose children have forsaken the Lord and His church. It does not have to be that way. Parents who really love their children will never give up on them and will always hope that they will do what is lawful and right.

Everyone ever born has responsibilities. If children do not learn their responsibilities and act upon them, there will be much heartache in the home. We are going to talk about the responsibilities children have to avoid the misery that comes from being disobedient.

I. ***Children Need To Honor Their Father And Mother***

- A. Children should be obedient and respectful to parents (Exodus 20:12). Honor means "to be renowned or glorified." A child cannot engage in sassy backtalk and at the same time honor their mother and father.
 - 1. Young people cannot successfully imitate Jesus unless they are obedient and respectful to parental authority (Luke 2:51-52). If Jesus could not dispense with obedience to His parents during His youth, then no young person today can either.
 - 2. Obeying parents is a commandment (Ephesians 6:1-3). It is interesting that the wind and waves "obey" Jesus, but children will not "hearken" to their parents (Luke 8:25; Acts 12:13).
 - a) Paul did not say, "Obey them when you want to" or "Obey them only when you think they're right." You should obey your parents because God says it is right; that is reward enough. That is the only way to get to heaven.
 - (1) You are still under authority. Therefore, your parents have the right and the responsibility to discipline you, whatever form that may take.
 - (2) Life is going to be very hard for you if you do not learn to submit to your parents. In life, you are going to have to submit to teachers, bosses, civil law, elders, and God. Respect for authority begins with parents (Leviticus 19:1-3).

- b) My parents are older, more experienced, more knowledgeable, and wiser. God knew what He was doing when He gave them charge to direct us. Why do you think the coaches in school, MLB, the NBA, and the NFL are all older than the players? Older usually equals wiser. If you play sports, do you listen to the coach? Sure you do! Your parents are trying to help with life! Do you really think anyone loves you more and wants you to succeed more than your parents?
- B. You may not believe or understand that they act in your best interest, but we should respect our parents' and elders' instruction (Proverbs 6:20-23; 30:17; 1 Timothy 5:1-2).
 - 1. Other parents are not your standard. Why do we try to obey everyone else's parents? "But Mom, Johnny's mom is letting him go to the party." "I never get to do anything fun like rest of kids."
 - 2. You know, Johnny's mom may not even worship God. They are not the standard: obey YOUR parents.
- C. The divinely revealed obligation to honor parents is a lifetime requirement. The opportunity to express love and concern to parents can quickly pass forever. Aged parents deserve to receive some time from their children.

II. ***Children Need To Help Provide For The Family***

- A. While children are growing up in the home, it is their obligation to help provide for the family. Both mothers and fathers have a full day of work from the time they wake up until the time they go to bed. Be a helper, not a hinderer! This not only means helping with chores, but also helping financially (Mark 7:9-13; 1 Timothy 5:4, 8).
 - 1. Keeping clothes on your back, a roof over your head, a vehicle to drive, and money for school and friends can drain a family of resources. When you are of age, you need to get a job and help with these expenses. However, this work must be approved by your parents and, by all means, must not interfere with your worship to God. It is a bad habit to start! It is best to avoid it altogether.
 - a) If your parents request or encourage you to get a job, it is not that they hate providing for you. It is merely that they want to give you the tools to succeed.
 - b) Success in this life depends upon a good work ethic (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Once you leave your parent's provision and care, this will be extremely important.
 - c) On the other hand, never forget that making a life is more important than learning how to make a living.
 - 2. Parents deserve more loyalty and allegiance than your friends. Your parents, not your peers, brought you into this world. Your parents,

- not your peers, cared for you as an infant. Your parents, not your peers, provide the food for your bodily nourishment, the shelter that is above your head, the medical care when you are sick, and the education you receive. Which of your peers would work forty hours or more each week and spend most of it on you, your brothers, and sisters? Your parents do. Which of your peers at school would spend an entire paycheck to buy you clothes you need to begin a new year of school? Your parents have done it many times. Why in the world would you want to be loyal to your friends than your parents?
- B. It is so sad to hear of children who live within easy driving distance who never come over for a meal or help their parents around the house as they grow older.
1. Frequently when these children bury their parents their tears are profuse and the weeping is long. But the show of postmortem love will not make up for a clear lack of it prior to death.
 2. You need to put aside the overworked excuses of being too busy or having too many pressing commitments. Brighten their hearts while their ears can still hear your voice or their fading eyesight can still read your letters. Expressions of love, care, and concern will be too late when expressed by the casket or the flower-covered grave.

III. ***Children Need To Remain Pure***

- A. Finally, you owe your home and family your utmost purity. Conduct which is unbecoming of a Christian and inappropriate to the ones who have invested so much in your upbringing can bring untold amounts of sorrow.
1. Both in and out of the home, young people should practice purity of thought, word, and deed. Purity must be inward as well as outward. External purity alone is hollow and lacks permanent value.
 2. The child owes the home a youthful life that is truly devoted to purity.
 - a) Avoid profanity and pornography (Ephesians 4:29; Matthew 5:8, 27-28; Philippians 4:8).
 - b) Do not start harmful habits such as smoking, chewing, drinking, or gambling (1 Timothy 4:12; 5:22).
 - c) Make promises and keep promises (Ecclesiastes 5:2-5; Matthew 5:37).
 - d) Do not gossip (Proverbs 16:28; 18:8).
 3. These have no place in the life of a practitioner of purity.
- B. Another area of remaining pure is in who you determine to marry. If you are a Christian, your purity will be greatly affected by who you choose to make your companion for life.

1. A strange situation exists today. We have more readily available information about dating and marriage than ever, yet we have more marital problems and divorces. The best you could say is that it is not getting better. It is not sufficient to say that God is needed in these homes, because even many Christian marriages are falling apart.
2. The fact that a man and a woman are both Christians is no guarantee that their marriage will succeed. Marriage is something that we have to work at; success is not automatic. When a spouse or dating partner is not a Christian, that can make matters even more difficult.
3. Marriage is the foundation of life, and we date people in order to find those whom we wish to marry. Sometimes you see people in the checkout lane discussing the latest Hollywood scandal featured on the front page of a tabloid. When Christians try to imitate the world and get their standards from Hollywood instead of heaven, there will be trouble. If we imitate the principles found in the scriptures, there will be joy and triumph in the home. Keep these principles in mind when you begin to date:
 - a) Sexual immorality (whether when we are married or single) is an offense against God (Genesis 39:9; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20). Nothing ever good will come when you step outside of God's laws for purity and chastity. Your body is pledged to God as an "instrument of righteousness" (Romans 6:12-13).
 - b) The secret to finding a mate in dating is being smart. Follow the advice of scripture and of others who have traveled down that road, and you will be able to make a much more intelligent choice. They say "love is blind" and this is more true than you think. Sometimes your godly parents may be able to judge better than you the character of the person you are dating.

Conclusion. Great joy can be found in the hearts of parents and children when Christ and the Bible are lifted up in the home. If you come from a Christian home, you owe that home the great joy that can come from obedience to the gospel. If you come from a non-Christian home, you owe that home the joy that comes from leading your family to the gospel. This you owe to God first, yourself next, and then to those who will profit from your example.

Children are exhorted to follow the example of Andrew for evangelism (John 1:40-42), Joseph for purity (Genesis 39:9), David for courage (1 Samuel 17:45), Josiah for determination (2 Chronicles 34:3), Daniel for loyalty (Daniel 1:8), Timothy for character (Acts 16:1-2; Philippians 2:20-22; 1 Timothy 4:12), and Jesus for everything (Philippians 2:5).