

WHY DADDY LOVES TO COME HOME

By: A Happy Mother

As a mother, I share these thoughts and verses with all the earnestness of my heart. I am not satisfied with all that I am doing about them, but I believe with all my heart that these convictions are from the Lord.

In Proverbs 22:6, He has told us, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Now I don't believe He gives any command without making Himself clear as to exactly what He wants and how He wants us to do it.

He has further promised all the resource of Himself to carry out that command. He tells us to train our children in the way they should go. First of all, there is a difference between training and teaching. Many of us are teaching our children the right way, the way they should go, but by neglect and indifference allow them to grow self-centered and self-willed lives.

We can train them to wait until we have given a command twice before they will obey. We can train them to wait until we have raised our voices before they obey. We can train them to wait until we have threatened before they obey. Or, we can train them to obey immediately when we have said it once in a normal, conversational tone. It is up to us.

The child who is taught "the way he should go" can hear other "teaching" and depart. But the promise to the parent who trains his child is, "When he is old, he will not depart from it."

The dictionary gives the meaning of training "to prepare for a contest, to instruct by exercise, drill, form to a proper shape, discipline for use." This is what God wants us to do to our children. He has told us very clearly how to do this in His Word. There are two examples in Scripture, one where the child was trained the way he ought to go and the other of two brothers who were taught the way they ought to go, but not trained.

In I Samuel 1:11, Hannah asked the Lord for a son. She prayed, "Give me a son, Lord, and I will give him back to you." She did not say, Lord, if you give me a son I will do my best to teach him to serve you and if he is willing and won't object, I will take him up to the temple to serve you." No, she never doubted that Samuel would do anything else but what she chose for him. I Samuel 1:27 says, "For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord. And he worshipped the Lord there." In I Samuel 3, Samuel's obedience is clear when three times he gets out of bed to "run" to Eli and ask him what he wants.

By contrast we have the two sons of Eli, the priest, in I Samuel 2:12, "Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord." The Scripture goes on to tell how Eli's two sons were disobedient, immoral, and "abhorred the offering of the Lord."

Eli knew what his sons were doing and he taught them what was right. He even scolded them. I Samuel 2:23-24 pictures Eli shaking his finger at his boys "And he (Eli) said unto them, Why do ye such things: for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. Nay my Sons: for it is no good report that I hear ye make the Lord's people to transgress."

But Eli neglected to train his sons, because "Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father." And the Lord had to cut off the generations of Eli from being priests. I Samuel 3:13 says, "For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." Poor Eli, he loved the Lord, he was sincere, he performed his office of priest well, but he did not train his children.

How can we train? Of course, we want our children to obey us but how can we get them to do it? He has given us the answer in His Word. Proverbs 22:15 says, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him."

Just a minute now, Lord, you surely do not mean I am to use a rod, a stick, on my child! My first thought is, "What am I to be, a policeman with a stick to keep him in line? I love him too much to want to inflict hurt on him." "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him is diligent to discipline him." Proverbs 13:24 RSV.

"But there are other ways of discipline. Words can be rods--a scolding, a rebuke." Proverbs 23:13-14 says, "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, thou shalt deliver his soul from hell."

But I want him to grow up free, without inhibitions. "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." (Proverbs 29:15)

"Surely these little disobediences are not serious enough yet. He is so young. I'll wait until he's older and I can reason with him and he can understand more." "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." (Proverbs 19:18)

"But I am afraid if I discipline him he will only rebel more." "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul."

Do you believe the Lord really means what He says in these verses? That if we love our children and want to obey Him concerning them we must take a stick and beat them when they disobey? I believe He means just that! I further believe that if we by faith obey His Word, He will fulfill all the promises He has given concerning child training.

Does the formula sound simple? It is. But the formula works only when carried out by an expert. And there is only one expert Parent, our Heavenly Father. He must do the work through us. But

because He indwells in us we have all the grace, love, patience, diligence, and wisdom necessary to do the job. And it takes every bit of it.

It means that every time I ask my child to do anything, either "Come here", "Don't touch", "Hush", "Put that down", or whatever it is, I must see that he obeys. When I have said it once in a normal tone, if he does not obey immediately, I must take up the switch and spank him (love demands this) enough to hurt so he will not want it repeated.

A superficial love wants an easier way, but real love must accept the fact that obedience comes at cost and pain. Hebrews 12:6-7 says, "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons." He puts it even more strongly in this portion by saying if God does not chasten you then you are bastards and not sons.

It is unpleasant business. But immediately after the correcting I can take the child on my lap to comfort and kiss him and tell him I love him but that he must obey. The Lord does this to us, doesn't He? Who of us has not been chastened severely by Him and then known the sweet comfort of His bosom as He tells us, "I am doing this because I love you."

Hosea 6:1 says, "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up." This is the blessing of the rod. Once it is used, once we have chastened, we can completely forget the incident and fellowship is restored between parent and child. Whereas when we are continually nagging and scolding, it becomes necessary to maintain a hostility to the child because he has not been corrected. We can soon teach a child that the rod is saturated with our love, that they receive it as a rod of training and correction--not a rod of punishment.

When it is used consistently for the slightest disobedience, it is never associated with anger or displeasure, because the parent is never driven to that point. No matter the nature of the circumstance of the offense, the correction is always the same because the wrong doing is always one of disobedience.

An incident with our three-and-a-half year old daughter is a beautiful illustration of this. As I was busy getting breakfast one morning I asked her to put on her shoes and socks. I am sure she intended to obey me, but she got busy playing and forgot. So I told her to go in and lay across the footstool because she did not obey me and I must spank her. I was busy in the kitchen and did not go in immediately. When I did, there she was with her pants down laying on her tummy across the footstool singing and swinging her feet like she was waiting for a treat.

She completely accepted the switch as the inevitable result of disobedience. Even our little twenty-month old boy, when he has touched something he knows we have told him not to, will put his little hand out to receive the switch. And most of the time he takes it with no more than a wimper because he knows he has brought it on himself. Afterward, oh, how free we are to love them and give them our affection.

But it takes so much diligence. This is why we cannot possibly do it in our own strength or if we have any other motive than to obey Christ. The motive to have nice well-behaved children will never carry us. It may carry us in a situation when we have no distractions and we have asked the child to come here. It is easy then to do what is necessary to train when he disobeys. But it won't carry us when we are comfortably settled in the chair nursing the baby and we say to an older child, "Come here, please." It is so easy to say it again a little sharply. But we have trained the child to believe we did not really mean it the first time.

No, it takes His grace to say, "Lord, you have told me to train my children. If I sit here in this chair I will be disobeying you. Help me to obey you by training my child to obey." He then gives grace to get up out of the chair, put the baby down, take up the switch, use it patiently and severely on the older child, take him upon your lap, and comfort him. "But he that loveth him is diligent to discipline." Only Christ can give us the diligence we need.

Recently we went through a soul-racking experience concerning our three-and-a-half year old. We were not obedient to the Lord in her training. It was very involved and I am not sure how to explain it except to say we were relying on ourselves and in our own reasoning, in many instances, rationalizing why we did not need to spank her. In many ways we were afraid of her.

We disciplined her just enough to maintain order but not training her or teaching her to discipline herself. We let her maintain subtle attitudes of unsubmitted will. We had a whole list of excuses why we were not obeying the Lord in this, none of which impressed Him. He brought us more and more under conviction about it until we were miserable.

I kept telling the Lord, "I can't, I just can't do it." And He would say, "I know you can't. Of course not. You never could!" I would say "I can't" but kept struggling and trying. Finally, I literally spent one entire night in tears telling the Lord that I was at the end of myself and if He wanted my children trained, He would have to do it.

The next morning, after a sleepless night, I took the switch in hand and said, "Okay, Lord, you do it." And He did. Because I had trained my daughter to be insensitive to my voice, I had to begin all over again to teach her to listen. I spoke once and followed through with the switch. As she sat on my lap and I loved her and comforted her, I would repeat the words, "Listen to my voice and obey."

At lunch time, and many spankings later, she sat down to eat and bowed her head to pray and thank the Lord for the food. Often before she had prayed, "Lord teach me to obey." But today she prayed, "Lord Jesus, thank you that I will obey." She stressed "will" as though she were saying, "Thank you, Lord, that Mommy has finally shaped up and I don't have to make the decisions anymore. I am glad because I did not know what to do anyway."

In the days that followed a beautiful transformation took place. She took on new sparkle, became interested in others, and began to live outside of herself. And what an inexpressible pleasure she became to her mommy and daddy and brothers and sisters.

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. (Hebrews 12:11) Should not our relationship to our children be a picture of our Father's faithful relationship to us?

Colossians 3:21 says, "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." When I read this verse the word that comes to mind is "inconsistency." It is our inconsistency as parents that provokes and discourages our children. When they never quite know what to expect of us.

One day we feel stern and say "No" to something and the next day we feel indifferent and preoccupied and in order to save ourselves the inconvenience will allow them to go ahead or overlook "little" disobediences. When we operate with the rod in this way, it becomes something else other than training. It is brute force to make the child not offend our moods. I believe it strengthens their resistance to authority. They are provoked to anger and become discouraged.

What we want is to train the child to bring his will into submission to ours, as his parents, because we love him and because we know and will do what is best for him. This places a big responsibility on us as parents, doesn't it?

But I believe if we are faithful to do it by His grace, the child will transfer that submission to Christ as he grows older. I think this is what it means in Proverbs 23:14, "Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." The child who is never taught by chastening to discipline himself and bring his will into submission to another will necessarily require chastening as he grows older if he is ever to mature. Then it is a much more painful process.

"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? When may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." (Jeremiah 13:23)

Mother, "Discipline your child while there is hope." (Proverbs 19:18 RSV.) We must begin the work of teaching self-discipline.

A comment I hear so often is, "But every child is different and should be dealt with differently." I agree that every child is different. We have as much variety of personality and temperament in our four children as any of you will find. But each one has required the rod to bring him to a place of submission. Nowhere in Scripture does the Lord qualify His command.

"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." I would like to share two personal illustrations of this:

Our Twenty-month old boy had a Class A temper, particularly when he was teething. When we crossed his will by saying "No" to him, he would not go ahead and directly disobey. Instead he would throw himself down on the floor and kick and scream. At first I would go over, pick him up, and say, "No, no," and sit him on my lap to make him hush. However, I realized that, though I relieved the situation for the time, I was not training him to discipline himself.

Then when he threw himself down and screamed, right in the middle of it, I switched him on his legs, went to a chair, told him to get up and come over to me, sat him on my lap, made him hush, loved, and comforted him. He came to the place where he threw himself down, began to scream, and right in the middle of it catch himself. By the time I got to him with the switch he was up, walking around, and busy-ing himself as though everything was jolly. Of course, he still got the switch because he had to come to the place where he accepted my will immediately. This is what he has learned to do, overcoming the tantrum.

Will this training break his spirit? No. This is where faith comes in. I believe that if I obey the Lord in this, He will teach our child to discipline himself, to subject his will to loving authority, and to still develop his personality in the fullest. In fact, it is the disciplined spirit that is free to blossom to its fullest because it is not thrown by circumstances. It is the pruned vine that flourishes and bears fruit.

Our older boy is unusually sensitive and emotional. He has been this way since he was born. He would burst into tears at the slightest provocation. The tears came at any new situation, happy or sad. And when he was very young, he would often burst into tears when we would ask him to do something he did not want to do. We would withhold correction, excusing him on the basis of his sensitivity.

Things got worse instead of better because he would escape in his tears when he did not want to obey. He was showing more insecurity all the time. I don't believe he did this consciously but we in a sense were training him to give in to his emotions. We reasoned if we used the rod on him, it would only deepen the problems.

The Lord began to convict us about the fact that we were not being obedient to His Word and trusting Him for the results. Finally, one night during devotions, Daddy asked him to do something he did not want to do with the usual result--tears. We tried to comfort and coax him, but it only brought on more tears. So we put him to bed without bringing him to the place of obedience.

As we both sat there and talked about it, our conviction grew that we were the ones who were not obeying. So Daddy went in and woke him up. He sat him on his lap until he was thoroughly awake and then told him that Daddy did not have peace about the incident and confessed to him that we had not been obeying the Lord in being sure that he obeyed us. Daddy told him that he would have to spank him because he did not obey. So he spanked him and put him back to bed.

This was a real turning point for both our son and us. After that the Lord gave us the grace to "let not our soul spare for his

crying" and to use the rod whenever we were not obeyed. He became much more secure and settled and began to learn to discipline his emotions. His temperment is the same and he is just as sensitive as ever, but he is learning that issues are more important than his emotions.

Before, he evaluated everything by his feelings. Sensitivity with good judgment is a good thing. When he learned to bring his emotions under control, he became much more interested in others and less involved with himself. I have often thought with this tendency to be so sensitive how insecure he would be today if we had continued to cater to our own lack of faith and his tears.

That evening was also a turning point in our son's life in that after that he began to open his heart to the Lord. It was as though he had been holding back that one area of his heart. When he discovered he had to give it up, he was free. His prayers were much more real. He became more attentive and interested during family devotions and ever since I have never known him to feel anything but warmth and love toward the Lord.

"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 shall deliver his soul from hell." (Proverbs 23:13-14)

This is the same attitude we have seen in our three-and-a-half year old daughter since that night when the Lord brought me to the end of myself. Her heart has responded in love to Him in a new way. God always keeps his promises.

Of course, the other areas of child training are as many and varied as life itself:

- Always treat the child with courtesy and respect.
- Give him a sense of hope and encouragement.
- Teach him to carry out responsibility.
- Live honestly and open before him as an example, sensitive to his needs.
- Always be sure he is growing spiritually.
- Feed his soul.
- Fill his home with fun and humor.
- Give him a feeling of worth--and much, much more.

But, all these are built on the foundation of obedience.

If by faith we will be obedient to His Word to train our children the way He has told us, we can trust Him for the results. We have a wonderful lesson in Abraham's obedience -- a man of faith who was called "friend of God".

"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him." (Genesis 18:19) . . .to bless him and make him a blessing.

(Pat Fabrizio)

Enthusiastically endorsed by many more families whose lives have been blessed by following God's instruction for child rearing and finding Him faithful, as always, to His promises.

PARENTAL REQUIREMENTS

*Deuteronomy 6:6-9, 20-24
Deuteronomy 11:19
Deuteronomy 12:28
Deuteronomy 31:12-13
Deuteronomy 32:46
Joshua 8:35
Psalms 34:11
Psalms 78:1-8
Isaiah 21:9-10
Isaiah 38:19
Joel 1:3
Proverbs 3:12

Proverbs 13:24
Proverbs 19:18
Proverbs 22:6,15
Proverbs 23:13,14
Proverbs 29:15,17
John 21:15
Ephesians 6:4
Colossians 3:21
I Timothy 3:4,5,12
I Timothy 5:8
Titus 1:6
Titus 2:4

COMMANDMENTS TO TEACH CHILDREN

Exodus 2:12
Deuteronomy 5:16
Deuteronomy 21:18-21
Deuteronomy 27:16
Leviticus 19:3,32
Leviticus 20:9
Matthew 15:4
Matthew 18:4,5,10
Matthew 19:19
Matthew 21:15
Mark 7:10
Mark 10:19
Luke 18:20
Ephesians 6:1,2,3
Colossians 3:20
I Timothy 2:22
I Timothy 4:12
Titus 2:6
Psalms 119:9

Psalms 148:12
Ecclesiastes 12:1
Lamentations 3:27
Malachi 1:6
Proverbs 1:8
Proverbs 3:1-10
Proverbs 4:1-4, 10-11,
21-22
Proverbs 5:1
Proverbs 6:20-25
Proverbs 8:17, 32-33
Proverbs 10:1
Proverbs 13:1
Proverbs 15:5-20
Proverbs 17:2, 21, 25
Proverbs 19:13
Proverbs 20:11
Proverbs 23:22-25
Proverbs 27:11
Proverbs 28:7