

THE WAY THEY SHOULD GO

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INTRODUCTION

- What is the role of a parent?
- How much difference does parenting make in the overall direction and spiritual success of a child?

“Training a child scripturally is not a gamble! Proper biblical training can fend off any attack that Satan may send. Most Christian parents have weak guidelines for training their children. (I do not say that as a criticism, rather as an observation.) They draw from a mixture of what their parents did in training them, what the latest ‘pop’ psychological advice is on rearing children, and what other parents are doing. Usually there is no strategy or well-defined goal.” (David Sorenson, Training Your Children To Turn Out Right! p. 5.)

- How early should this training begin?

Dr. John A. Stormer begins his book, *Growing Up God’s Way*, with this perspective.

Dr. Burton L. White, longtime director of Harvard University’s Preschool Project, has studied thousands of preschool children. They come from varying backgrounds. Based on his studies and research, he’s concluded:

The family is the No. 1 influence on the child. From eight months to three years is the most vital time in a child’s life. As a direct result of what parents do—or don’t do—lifetime competencies are set. Chances are that the competent child will always be competent. The ‘slow’ child will always lag behind. Only one child out of ten receives as good a start as he might.

In plain English, Dr. White is saying that most parents do not know how to raise children—or they don’t take the time to do the job right. Because most parents fail in some way, nine out of ten children never achieve all they could accomplish in school and life.

The theories of this Harvard educator concerning the importance of the child’s earliest years have strong Biblical support. In the book of Proverbs, God says:

Proper training of a child will endure throughout his life. The parallelism is formal; the second clause provides the consequence of the first. The imperative is "train" (hanok); the verb includes the idea of "dedicate," and so the training should be with purpose. The "child" (na`ar) presumably is in the youngest years. The NEB captures the point of

early instruction: "Start a boy on the right road." The right road is expressed "in the way he should go" ('al-pi darko). The way the verse has been translated shows that there is a standard of life to which he should go. Of course, he would have to be young enough when change for the better was still possible. The consequence is that when he is old (yazqin), he will not depart from it. Whybray notes that the sages were confident of the character-forming quality of their teaching (Expositor's Bible Commentary, Book of Proverbs, p. 125).

Proverbs 22:6 is a religious "rabbit's foot" that many sorrowing parents and grandparents desperately resort to when children stray from the Lord: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." They interpret this to mean, "they will stray away for a time but then come back," but that isn't what it says. It says that if they're raised in the wisdom and way of the Lord, they won't stray away at all. Even in old age, they will follow the wisdom of God (Wiersbe, Be Skillful).

ILLUSTRATION: The growth of a tree

I. _____—"when he is old"

- How would you like to have a messenger from heaven tell you about the future of your children? That's exactly what happened to Zacharias (Luke 1:5-17).
- We should have a greater vision and goal for our children than Zacharias and Elizabeth had for John the Baptist (Luke 7:28).

A. _____ must have a _____ for themselves first.

1. Individually

a. Godly life

- Righteous—both were saved. Unusual for that day—Judaism was corrupted.
- Obedient to biblical principles (they were unusual—a minority!)
 - Daily obeyed the commandments
 - Holy life—consistent and separated
 - Sacrificial--**THOSE WHO DO NOT RATIONALIZE ABOUT THEIR OWN SPIRITUAL LIVES WILL BE ABLE TO SEE GOD'S BEST FOR THEIR CHILDREN.**
 - Life of faith and victory.

- Blameless—strong testimony
 - Inside and outside the home.

b. Life of service

- Zacharias was ready to serve the Lord.
- Zacharias was active in the Lord's work.

c. Life of prayer

- Zacharias was serving at the time of prayer.
- Zacharias saw John's future when his heart was open before the Lord.
- We need a daily time of prayer for each of our children.

2. Collectively

a. Marriage must be Biblical and sound.

b. Need to be striving as a couple to serve the Lord.

B. Parents need to have a _____ vision for their children.

1. Our children have a greater potential than John the Baptist.

a. They have the Holy Spirit.

b. They can have great power and blessing.

Colossians 1:28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

2 Corinthians 5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

2. Our children will not automatically reach that potential.

a. Children are not programmed with instincts.

“Most baby animals are entirely self-supporting within a few weeks or months at most, but it is normal for children to be in the home and somewhat dependent upon their parents for support for twenty years. A colt or calf can walk the day it is born, but a child normally takes ten or twelve months. Obviously, God intended the child to be helpless and dependent long enough to stay in the home for training.

God intended that the home should develop in children the moral qualities, and principles and habits and adjustments essential to good character” (John R. Rice, The Home p. 193).

- Goals, ideals, practice, and attitude come from parents.
- Second in impact is culture—however, it becomes #1 if we forfeit our leadership

b. God gave parents to lead children to their God-given potential.

- Children have natural talents—however, they must have help in determining their spiritual gifts and how God is going to use their lives.

c. Parents are to keep the vision before their children.

- Zacharias kept the vision before John (Luke 1:76-80).

“Develop conversations in the context of the delights of daily living, focusing on these goals (goals that are developed for the ultimate outcome of your child). Each day learn to talk about these things rather than trivia only. Of course you will also talk about trivia, for life is filled with trivia, often necessary trivia. But as you live out the goals for your children, and see them lived out in your children’s lives, you will want to talk about them (V. Gilbert Beers, Parents Talk with Your Children, p.53).

- Samson’s parents did not keep the vision before him.

II. _____—“a child”

A. Our children are born _____.

1. Sinful from conception

Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

2. Driven by a wicked heart

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

Psalms 58:3 The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

“Every baby starts life as a little savage. He is completely selfish and self-centered. He wants what he wants when he wants it: his bottle, his mother’s attention, his playmate’s toys, his uncle’s watch, or whatever. Deny him these and he seethes with rage and aggressiveness which would be murderous were he not so helpless. He’s dirty, he has no morals, no knowledge, no developed skills. This means that all children, not just certain children, but all children, are born delinquent. If permitted to continue in their self-centered world of infancy, given free reign to their impulsive actions to satisfy each want, every child would grow up a criminal, a thief, a killer, a rapist” (Minnesota Crime Commission).

a. Humanists believe that we are born good and learn evil.

“Philosophers of this world have been telling us for centuries that children are born innocent; that is, without sin and without guilt. Perhaps it was the philosopher John Locke who gave us the clearest expression of this idea in his Essay Concerning Human Understanding, first published in 1690. Locke said that at birth the mind of every individual is a tabula rasa, or a blank tablet, to be written upon by environment and experience. The child is born neutral: without experience, without morality, without ideas, without concepts” (Bruce A. Ray, Withhold Not Correction, pp. 24-25).

b. Humanists therefore believe that parents should allow their children to follow their natural instincts which were developed through evolution.

3. Without grace, they cannot do good.

Romans 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

B. Our children’s sinful condition must be dealt with _____ .

Proverbs 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself

bringeth his mother to shame.

“The word from the Hebrew translated ‘left to himself’ is sometimes used of animal pasturing without fences or restraint. This word is also used in a general sense ‘to send off.’ When contrasted with a child who is controlled by his parents, it pictures a child who is sent off into adulthood without being trained. The principle taught by this verse is that a child will grow up in conformity with his sinful nature if he is not restrained by his parents” (J. Richard Fugate, What the Bible says about. . .Child Training, p. 51).

1. The Lord chastens His children.

2 Samuel 7:14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:

Hebrews 12:5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

2. This is a model for all parents.

Hebrews 12:9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

3. The “rod” is God’s way for parents to correct the depraved nature—prepares the way for grace.

Proverbs 22:15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

Proverbs 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.

Proverbs 13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

Proverbs 23:13 Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.

Proverbs 23:14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.

III. _____—“the way he should go”

A. Command Given to the _____

Exodus 20:12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Deuteronomy 5:16 Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Matthew 15:4 For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.

Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

1. The command is strategically located in the Ten Commandments.

Mark 12:30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. 31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

- a. **First four commandments address man’s relationship to his God.**
 - b. **Last five commandments direct man’s relationship with other men.**
 - c. **The commandment to honour parents is the transitional commandment between the first and second table of the law.**
 - d. **How a child treats his parents will affect his relationship with and attitude toward the Lord. Also, his relationship to other people and authority is shaped through this relationship. If there is failure in keeping this commandment, a child’s life is greatly injured.**
2. The command involves both _____ and _____.

- a. **“To obey”—to hearken to a command**

ὕπακούω -- 1) to listen, to hearken 1a) of one who on the knock at the door comes to listen who it is, (the duty of a porter) 2) to hearken to a command 2a) to obey, be obedient to, submit to

b. “To honor”—to have deep respect, reverence—refers to God

τιμᾶω -- 1) to estimate, fix the value 1a) for the value of something belonging to one's self 2) to honour, to have in honour, to revere, venerate

3. The command has _____.

a. This is the only commandment with promise.

“I do not wonder that the Holy Spirit in the New Testament calls attention to this wonderful promise, and remarks that the fifth commandment is the first one with a promise. See, how much is involved in the promise.

First, it promises a long life to the individual. Obedience to father and mother would involve temperate living, the restraint and character, and self-control that would make for good health and a long life.

Second, such basic and fundamental morality, and righteousness would naturally bring upon one the blessing of God, and His protection against harm. God will see that righteousness is rewarded.

Third, ‘that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.’ Thus, one’s safe enjoyment of property and possessions is involved in honoring father and mother.

Fourth, and principally, the nation Israel itself was promised long, continued protection, and prosperity in the land of Canaan if the nation would observe this command to honor parents. Honoring father and mother means respect for law and order, a good home government. But where government in the home succeeds, then government of the nation is revered and obeyed. And where God’s blessing is on the individual home, it will be upon the nation. It is a well-known fact of history that when the home decays, the government and national integrity decay likewise” (John R. Rice, The Home, p.228).

b. This commandment should affect us all of our lives (Proverbs 22:6).

B. Command Given to the _____

1. God holds the parents responsible for enforcing obedience to the fifth commandment.

a. God knew Abraham would cause his children to live a life of obedience.

Genesis 18:18 Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty

nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19 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.

b. God held Eli responsible for the obedience of his sons.

1 Samuel 3:13 For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

c. When commandments for submission are given, it is always the biblical responsibility of the leaders to lead in a way that accomplishes God's purpose in those who are to follow.

*"It is natural for us to seek to withhold discipline from our children. It is much easier for us to do something else or to be some place else, but God requires of Christian parents and especially of Christian fathers that they administer the discipline which He reveals in His Word. For parents, and especially for fathers, to withhold that discipline is to sin against God and it is also to sin against the children that we say we love. To withhold that necessary correction is to rebel against the Lord. We must not avoid our responsibility, but rather we must seek God for grace to fulfill that responsibility which He has placed upon us. It is not a light thing, because the very souls of our children are the issues at hand. By administering discipline, God says we will deliver their souls from hell. But if we withhold that discipline, we are responsible for the destruction of the souls of our own children!"(Bruce A. Ray, *Withhold Not Correction*, p. 35).*

2. God holds the parents responsible for the training of their children to walk in the way of the Lord.

Ephesians 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

a. We are to exercise authority and not frustrate our children.

"You will do your children no favor to allow them to grow up undisciplined. Those who are allowed to have their own way are restless, discontent, and insecure—like a ship without a rudder, tossed by the wind and waves of expediency. Lack of discipline is the most common complaint of teachers who indicate its serious interference with their goals in the classroom. Parents, too, find ways to get obnoxious children out of their way as much as possible, hoping the problem will go away so they will not have to bother. Because undisciplined children are not likely to receive as much positive feedback and attention from adults as well-

disciplined children, they are often hampered in mental development” (Raymond and Dorothy Moore, Home Built Discipline, p. 17).

b. We are to nurture them.

ἐκτρέφω --1) to nourish up to maturity, to nourish 2) to nurture, bring up

c. We are to train them.

παιδεία -- 1) the whole training and education of children (which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals, and employs for this purpose now commands and admonitions, now reproof and punishment) It also includes the training and care of the body 2) whatever in adults also cultivates the soul, esp. by correcting mistakes and curbing passions. 2a) instruction which aims at increasing virtue 2b) chastisement, chastening, (of the evils with which God visits men for their amendment)

d. We are to admonish them.

νουθεσία -- 1) admonition, exhortation

e) We will discourage our children if we do not train them.

ἀθυμέω -- 1) to be disheartened, dispirited, broken in spirit

“There will be those among my readers who feel that the deliberate, premeditated application of minor pain to a sweet little child is a harsh and unloving recommendation. I ask those skeptics to hear me out. Consider the alternatives. On the one hand, there is constant nagging and strife between parent and child. When the youngster discovers there is no threat behind the millions of words he hears, he stops listening to them. The only messages he responds to are those reaching a peak of emotion, which means there is much screaming and yelling going on” (James Dobson, Dare to Discipline, p. 39).

IV. _____ — “Train up”

A. _____ for the First Child

1. Biblical marriage

a. Submit to the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with

the Spirit;

b. Submit to biblically mandated roles in marriage.

Ephesians 5:21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

c. Develop biblical communication skills (Eph. 4:25-32).

Agree fully on the biblical teaching concerning child-rearing.

2. Biblical prayer

a. Learn to be an intercessor in prayer.

b. Give each of your children to the Lord.

ILLUSTRATION: My parents gave me to the Lord before I was born, and asked Him to take me home if I did not serve Him. They did this with my brothers and sisters also.

B. The Child's _____

1. The first few months

a. These are important developmental months.

“What you do from day one has future consequences. Yet many parents wait until speech develops, not realizing that newborns understand parental management of their care as clearly as they ever will and know to what state they will be indulged” (Raymond and Dorothy Moore, Home Built Discipline, p. 67).

b. Beware of humanistic philosophy—“ _____.”

The health professionals teach that each baby knows what is best for them and will let you know when they need to eat and sleep. This completely discounts the human nature that is corrupt and utterly selfish. The child learns to be in charge and parents train themselves to obey every whim and desire of the baby. This cannot be reversed very easily and often sets the tone for the lifetime relationship between the child and the parents.

“Unless you take charge systematically, they will take charge of you—through crying, eating, bodily demands, and a thousand other instinctive inventions. Remember, they are not reasonable in their early years, so they will need loving firmness as you mold them into treasures of great value and build in values that

stabilize them through their adolescent years” (Raymond and Dorothy Moore, *Home Built Discipline*, p. 67).

ILLUSTRATION: At a hospital session on demand feeding, the instructor said that you’ll feel like throwing your baby out of the window.

- c. **Take charge by putting the child on a reasonable and consistent _____.**
- Mothers can tell between demand crying versus physical distress crying.
 - The child must realize they are not going to be in control.
 - They should be sleeping through the night and fitting in to the planned schedule in a few weeks.
 - Begin a time that you sing and read to them.
2. The last few months
- a. **Begin the enforcement of _____.**
- “Discipline in general and self-discipline in particular force us to do what we ought to do whether it is fun or not. Discipline impels us to do what we ought, whether we feel like it or not. Discipline provides the framework of doing what needs to be done, even though we want to do something else. This has profound ethical, spiritual and moral implications. In short, the more disciplined I am, the easier it will be to do what I ought to do and to be what I ought to be” (David Sorenson, *Training Your Children to Turn Out Right!*, p. 43).*
- b. **This will include the beginning of the use of the _____.**
- “At some point, usually between nine to twelve months of age, you will know that your child has a rather good idea of what you want. However, you will also see and sense that a conscious decision has been made by the child to ‘do his own thing’ He is not a confirmed, hardened rebel at this point. He is just testing you. This is the occasion for the first spanking. This is not cruelty or child abuse. Firm action, at the right time, avoids the need for much painful hassling later. This is why John Wesley’s mother, when describing how she raised her children, said:*
- *‘When they turned a year old (and some before) they were taught to fear the rod. . .by which means they escaped abundance of correction which they might otherwise have had later.’*

Once the child's will was brought under control the job of developing an understanding in the mind could proceed to an orderly fashion. Mrs. Wesley said:

- *'In order to form the minds of children, the first thing to be done is to conquer the will and bring them to an obedient temper. To inform the understanding is a work of time, and must with children proceed by slow degrees, as they are able to bear it, but the subjecting of the will is a thing which must be done at once, and the sooner the better, for by neglecting timely correction they will contract a stubbornness and obstinacy which are hardly ever after conquered, and never without using such severity as would be painful to me and the child'" (John A. Stormer, Growing Up God's Way, p. 68).*

c. Full obedience needs to be developed.

- Immediately
- Completely
- Respectfully
- Joyfully—with the right heart attitude

The first area to be continually enforced is that of immediate obedience. Correction should come after the first unwillingness to obey. The parent must not allow the child to believe that enforcement will come only after commands are repeated several times.

d. A consistent biblical use of the rod needs to be developed.

Dr. John Stormer gives some practical advice on this subject.

"Spanking is commanded by God. It should not be carried out in anger or with an attitude of getting even with a child. Therefore, when a child commits an offense for which spanking is a penalty, the wise parent should make a brief prayer the first step in the disciplinary action. By taking the time to pray, the parent gives God an opportunity to correct any wrong attitudes. He also opens himself to the leadership and guidance of God's Spirit if there should be some unusual circumstance in the in the situation requiring attention. Discipline should never be an automatic routine.

After prayer, the child's guilt should be established. A very small child should be faced with his offense. Older children should be required to state what they have done (not why).

Before applying discipline, parents should establish their authority. ‘Johnny, do you know that God says I have to spank you because _____? Quote an appropriate verse from Proverbs to establish the need for the spanking. Establish that you must apply discipline because of your love for him. You can tell the child, ‘I love you too much to let you go on doing wrong. I must spank you because it will help you to do right in the future.

The child should then be spanked on the bottom only. Never slap a child’s face or strike other parts of the body, pull hair, or drag by an arm. The paddling should be administered privately.

Use the rod hard enough and long enough to make the child cry—and until he gets over any anger which is shown when the rod is applied. (Mrs. Wesley required her children to ‘cry softly’). The paddling should be long enough and hard enough to outweigh the pleasures of sin.

When the spanking is completed, give the child a few minutes to calm himself. Then discuss the offense with him. (The Scripture says ‘The rod and reproof give wisdom...’) Then move to re-establish fellowship. The child should be brought to ask for forgiveness and it should be granted. One wise father required his sons to thank him for administering the spankings they needed. Assure the child of your forgiveness (which means you will not bring up the offense again) and your love.

*After prayer and any final brief words of encouragement, get things quickly back to normal. Dual penalties such as a spanking plus banishment of a child to his room are counter-productive” (John A. Stormer, *Growing Up God’s Way* pp. 71-72).*

e. Loving teaching should be part of the daily routine.

- Singing to the child
- Reading Scripture
- Talking to the child—explaining basic truths even though they do not seem to understand
- Stimulating parent-involved activity time

C. The Child’s _____

1. Consistent discipline should be established.

- a. Commands should be obeyed immediately and completely. They should be clear and reasonable. Do not give a command unless you are willing to follow through with discipline immediately if it is not obeyed.**

b. Dinner time and bedtime must be times where consistent obedience is enforced.

- Do not give them what they want to get them to stop crying. This habit begins with “demand feeding” and will continue if the parent does not establish themselves clearly as the authority.
- The rule should be established—if you cry for it you do not get it.
- Do not bribe them with food or other rewards to get them to stop misbehaving or to cause them to obey. They will take you to the limit. They should do right because you have given a command without any need for an incentive. (Note—As they mature, proper goals and rewards can be set up to develop good habits. If they complete a chart for a certain chore then a reward would be certainly in order. However, if they do not obey discipline should still be administered).
- Bedtime should not be a battle. When the lights go out they should not be allowed to get up to ask for anything. Do not use rocking as the method to quiet them to get them to sleep. Have a scheduled rock time when you can love on them and have a special time together.
- Dinner time should also be a time when the child learns to fully cooperate and obey. They should eat what you give them and finish it during the time the others are eating. They should learn to be quiet during prayer and family altar. Also, they should not be allowed to interrupt the mealtime with screaming or other attention getting actions.

c. Control is essential if teaching and communication is going to be established.

2. Genuine communication should be established.

“If you think of your children as small and unimportant, you will talk with them about small, insignificant matters. You will communicate trivia to them. And their growth will reflect this dimension of talk. You will leave behind a generation of stunted dwarfs.

On the other hand, if you see your children as future parents, future leaders, future men and women of God, and see them as growing daily toward this important role, you will do all in your power to shape their lives toward the grand objective of helping them become parents, leaders, and men and women of God. Your conversation will point toward that end” (V. Gilbert Beers, Parents Talk with Your Children, p. 65).

a. Talk intelligently to them.

b. Develop good eye contact with them.

“When you first think about eye contact, it seems relatively unimportant in relating to your child. However, as we work with children, observe communications between parent and child, and study research findings, we realize how essential eye contact is. Eye contact is crucial not only in making good communicational contact with a child, but in filling his emotional needs. Without realizing it, we use eye contact as a primary means of conveying love, especially to children. A child uses eye contact with his parents (and others) to feed emotionally. The more parents make eye contact with their child as a means of expressing their love, the more a child is nourished with love and the fuller is his emotional tank” (Ross Campbell, How to Really Love Your Child, p. 37).

c. Read the Bible and other good books to them.

d. Sing songs and teach them to your children. Have good music playing in your home all the time.

e. Teach basic Bible truths. Also begin basic Scripture memorization.

“The home-taught Bible is the greatest source of moral character. Homes where the Lord Jesus becomes their own Saviour and Lord will have no child delinquency problem. Sound habits, a social conscience, and moral responsibility follow the light of the Word of God into the minds of children” (John R. Rice, The Home, p. 276).

3. Conquering of the will should occur before the second year is over.

- Normally an incident will occur between 18-24 months that will test a parents resolve. The child’s will must not be allowed to prevail no matter how long and difficult the disciplinary process is.
- It is wise to pray for wisdom and strength to prepare for these critical times.

D. The Child’s _____

1. Unconditional love needs to be constantly demonstrated.

“Real love is unconditional, and should be evident in all love relationships (see 1 Corinthians 13:4-7). The foundation of a solid relationship with our child is unconditional love. Only that type of love relationship can assure a child’s growth to his full and total potential. Only this foundation of unconditional love can assure prevention of problems such as feelings of resentment, being unloved,

guilt, fear, insecurity.

We can be confident that a child is correctly disciplined only if our primary relationship with him is one of unconditional love. Without a basis of unconditional love it is not possible to understand a child, his behavior, or to know how to deal with misbehavior” (Ross Campbell, How to Really Love Your Child, p. 29).

- a. **Our children should not feel that we only love them when they please us.**
 - b. **Our children should not feel that they have to achieve and succeed if they are going to receive love.**
2. There needs to be an acceptance that parents are training all the time—positively or negatively (All of the quotes below are from J. Richard Fugate’s book *What the Bible Says About Child Training* pp. 72-83).

a. **Negative training by _____**

- *“Parents are training their child when they ignore his negative behavior traits. All parents do this to some extent. We all have blind spots, areas in our own life where we do not see our own faults. These areas tend to block us from training the same problems out of our children.”*
- *“Default training can also occur when parents do not enforce even those standards by which they live. This failure may be due to the parents’ occupation with their own problems or duties, weariness of the child’s need for constant correction, or just plain laziness.”*

b. _____ **negative training**

- *“A child can be trained that obedience is required only after instructions have been repeated a second or third time.”*
- *“A child can be trained to obey only after instructions are accompanied by an implied threat (a raised voice) or an explicit threat of punishment.”*
- *“A child can be trained to ignore instructions even if repeated or accompanied by threats. Being allowed to ignore instructions completely is actually training in disobedience.” (This will cause the child to not listen seriously to God’s Word and begin engaging in a game of Russian roulette when it comes to authority.)*
- *“A child can be trained to question or argue about every instruction given.”*

- *“A child can train his parents to wait until he decides when to obey. This behavior is not obedience, but a subtle form of disobedience which is most often practiced by females. Where a boy is more likely to rebel in an overt manner, a girl will often express her will by passive rebellion.”* **Note—beware of allowing your daughter to use her feminine charm to get her way.**

3. Serious training in all aspects of life should begin in earnest.

Luke 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

a. _____ development

- Teaching of basic doctrine
- Memorization of Scripture
- Teaching of character traits

“Amazingly, a careful study of historical records shows that the needed traits are the very characteristics that the parents of George Washington and John Wesley developed in their sons 250 years ago. These basic character traits, supplemented by several dozen others Washington and Wesley developed as they grew older, made the two men the giants of their age.

Qualities acquired early in life by both Washington and Wesley and needed by your child include:

1. Attentiveness
2. Obedience
3. Contentment
4. Neatness
5. Reverence
6. Forgiveness
7. Gratefulness
8. Faith
9. Truthfulness
10. A sense of security
11. Meekness
12. Cautiousness
13. Patience” (John A. Stormer, *Growing Up God’s Way*, p. 99).

- Involve more with Christian music.

- Teach the truth of salvation and pray earnestly for salvation during these formative years.

b. _____ development

- Train to think by having quality communication
- Answer questions carefully
- Teach to read—by reading to them and then training them in phonics
- Avoid the viewing of television—better to have them read and be involved in creative and learning activities
- Begin their musical training—vocal and instrumental
- Teach to concentrate and finish the job

c. _____ development

- Learned primarily through good relationships in the home—good communication with parents and love and respect for siblings
- Teach proper etiquette and courtesy—they need to respond properly to adults
- Involve them in the church ministry

d. _____ development

- Opportunities for physical exercise should be provided
- Chores need to be given where the child learns to work hard and enjoys getting the job done.

E. The Child's _____

(The following principles are in addition to those that have already been established in the above mentioned stages of a child's development.)

1. The first half

a. The father needs to begin taking a more active role

- Fathers are often at the busiest times in their careers. Yet a father's influence on his child begins to increase and continues to do so until he is the dominant influence during the teen years.

“Love your child. Love him enough to give yourself to him. You men and you women, you will make the mistake of your life if you spend all of your spare time

playing with the folks you work with. You fathers—think twice about...going fishing with your best buddy. Take time for your children. Let them know you love them. Spend time with them. You're going to have them a long time after your buddy is gone" (Bill Rice, Love 'em, Lick 'em and Learn 'em, pp. 64-65).

b. A sense of purpose and accomplishment needs to be developed

- The child needs to understand that God has a unique purpose for him in the ministry
- Reading should be developed completely as this bears directly on his success in every other academic area.
- Regular musical training is a proven way to increase his ability to produce successfully.

"As a parent and a musician, I believe that the wonderful experience of music is a marvelous way to help our children along that road to adulthood. There are so many benefits of music that can become 'transferable skills' for all areas of life. You may already be aware of this and eager to provide that musical experience for your child. Remember, it is a process and even the most enthusiastic of us needs to be reminded of those benefits along the way.

Obviously, if your child turns out to be the next Caruso or Bernstein, you will see clearly the long-term value in providing music for them. But I'm not concerned here about the rewards of a professional musician. Instead, let's focus on some of the advantages the process of an education in music can provide every child.

The areas on which I want to focus are: Perseverance, confidence, responsibility, identity, self-esteem, discipline, a love of music, teamwork, identification of talents, using time wisely, following directions, precision, motor control, overcoming fears in public speaking, intellectual development, social development, commitment to excellence, creativity" (Patrick Kavanaugh, Raising Musical Kids, pp. 18-19).

2. The Second Half

a. Clear teaching of the Spirit-filled life needs to be taught and then the child needs to be guided into this reality.

- The home needs to be alive with the presence of the Lord
- All of the family needs to be involved in the work of the Lord
- The children should hear as many strong Bible messages as possible

b. Relationships need to be built that will insure closeness during the coming teen

years.

Proverbs 23:26 My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.

It is at this time in a child's life that they are spiritually aware enough to understand key issues of life. It is vital that they develop a close relationship with both parents so that key decisions can be made as early as possible. These decisions include purity, willingness to submit to parental leadership in the finding of a life's mate, desiring God's perfect will for their life's work and the commitment to believe the Bible completely.

- Father/daughter relationship

- Mother/son relationship

- Father/son relationship

- Mother/daughter relationship

F. The Child's _____

The secret to the teen years is the discipline, love, communication and training of the earlier years. The teen years should be a time for deepening relationships within the family. The convictions and heart of the child should already be set by this time. Teens will make key decisions and have to battle the wrong influences in their lives, but their

relationship with their parents should already be set.

Unfortunately this is not always the case for a variety of reasons. The key to improving relationship problems is communication and the solving of problems quickly so that bitterness will not set in. A few key principles will be given to help keep your child on the way they should go.

1. Loving discipline still must be maintained.
 - a. **All aspects of obedience should be enforced (Immediately, completely, respectfully, and joyfully).**
 - b. **Although a parent wants to see his child have fewer times of discipline so that they can be treated with more respect, it is vital that the teen knows that he will have to obey fully. This understanding should be clearly understood until he is no longer under the parents' authority.**
 - c. **There will be less and less need for discipline as the child lives a Spirit-controlled life and is transformed from within.**
2. Any conflict must be handled immediately.
 - a. **Parents must be the first to admit they were wrong when there is conflict. They are to be an example of the believer and show the reality of their Christianity.**
 - b. **If problems are left unresolved, bitterness will creep in and lead to defilement.**
 - c. **Hebrews 12:15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;**
 - d. **Close communication must be maintained.**
 - e. **There needs to be a balance of love and control. The teen should love to be with his family more than anyone else. It should be where he feels supported, accepted, loved unconditionally, and wanted. Nothing should compare with his home and he should feel a strong loyalty to the cause of his family.**
3. Full direction should be given in the matter of courtship.

4. All precautions need to be taken to keep away the influences of the world and the tendencies to be like the “evil man” and “strange woman” of the book of Proverbs.

a. Strange woman

b. Evil man

G. The Child's _____ (before marriage)

1. The parents need to assume responsibility for directing their child in the critical issues of a life's mate and life's calling.

a. Responsibility for the son

b. Responsibility for the daughter

2. Close communication and counsel is vital at this time.

CONCLUSION

THE WAY THEY SHOULD GO

Dr. Wayne Van Gelderen Jr.

ANSWER KEY

- I. Vision
 - I. A. Parents, vision
 - I. B. New Testament
- II. Theology
 - II. A. depraved
 - II. B. God's way
- III. Responsibility
 - III. A. children
 - III. A. 2. submission, attitude
 - III. A. 3. lifelong consequences
 - III. B. parents
- IV. Methodology
 - IV. A. Preparation
 - IV. B. First Year
 - IV. B. 1. b. schedule
 - IV. B. 1. c. demand feeding
 - IV. B. 2. a. obedience
 - IV. B. 2. b. rod
 - IV. C. Second Year
 - IV. D. Preschool Years
 - IV. D. 2. a. default
 - IV. D. 2. b. Overt
 - IV. D. 3. a. Spiritual
 - IV. D. 3. b. Mental
 - IV. D. 3. c. Social
 - IV. D. 3. d. Physical
 - IV. E. Elementary Years
 - IV. F. Teen Years
 - IV. G. Adult Years