



Shade for Our Children

(Part two of two)

This issue, we continue with part 2 of the transcription of John MacArthur's message. We look at the biblical principles of parenting, the roles of both the father and the mother; and finally the rights and wrong of parenting. May we be encouraged that we have in our hands the best instruction manual to teach our children — the Bible. J Koh

Biblical Principles of Parenting

Here's the principle stated in Ephesians 6:4. There are two issues that we have to look at. The negative aspect is "do not provoke your children to anger" and the positive is "bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord".

John MacArthur stated that the greatest abuse to a child is not physical abuse or punishment but to leave that child alone because that child cannot develop physically, spiritually, socially, mentally on its own. It will be that savage all its life long. You throw your child away when you don't spend time with him. When you don't bring that child up in discipline and instruction from the Lord, you throw that child away. Our children are 'thrown' all over the place. The mother wants to go here, go there, the child is in the way, so what do we do? We just farm the child with this babysitter or with a neighbour or with grandma just don't cramp my style. That is the 'throw-away' child ... Raising a child is a full time responsibility. That's how mothers in the past put up the tree that shades us.

1 Thessalonians gives some insight into the roles of mothers and fathers. It says that a mother is the gentle nursing, tender caring, loving, nurturing person. The father gives the exhortation, encouragement, the commands and sets the standard. That's the partnership. They do it together. Proverbs 4:3 brings the parents together in the instruction of the children. Both have to be involved in the mental, physical, social, spiritual development.

Two Harvard university sociologists identified the crucial factors in predicting future delinquency of children ages 5 and 6. They tracked their lives for a number of years. They achieved a 90% accuracy in predicting future delinquency – or anti social behaviour/conduct.

4 necessary factors to prevent delinquent anti social dysfunctional children

1. **The father's discipline** - He must be firm, fair and consistent. You work against future disaster.
2. **The mother's supervision** - The mother knows where her children are at all times, what they are doing. She is involved in their lives personally and continually supervises them. In her presence she controls them and when they are out of her presence, she is still aware of what they are doing and where they are and they know she knows.
3. **The father's and mother's demonstrated affections** - Where the father and mother love each other and demonstrates that affection before the children, there is

a healthy response. They feel secure, they feel there is a loving control of their world. They also feel good about marriage for themselves.

4. **The family's cohesiveness** - Family time spent together.

Aren't these what the bible teaches us? John MacArthur questions why we need Harvard sociologists to teach us truths that are already written in the bible. The father is the head of the family. The mother nourishes and cherishes the children. They are to love each other and do things together as a family. That's what makes healthy children.

Paul Myer gives 5 points to the right parent-child relationship.

1. **Love** – parent loving each other and the children.
2. **Discipline** – setting a standard and making people live by that standard or face the consequence.
3. **Consistency** – No one expects you to be perfect but you have to be consistent. Both parents need to stick together, use the same rules. Consistently enforce the same rules that the child doesn't get away with something one time and get punished for the same thing another time.
4. **Example** – In healthy families, the parents do not expect their children to live up to a standard that they themselves do not or cannot keep. There should not be hypocrisy on the part of the parents.
5. **Man is the Head of the Home.** The father must lead in the home. He must set the standard, live by that standard and correct to that standard.

The rights and wrongs of parenting

Ephesians 6:4 – "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." "Provoke not your children to wrath" How do you provoke your children to that kind of anger?

1. **By overprotection.** Fence them in. Don't trust them. Don't give them enough opportunities to develop their own independence to find out who they are. Don't let them take any risks.
2. **By favouritism.** Favour one child over the other. That is very frustrating. Don't ever compare your children. Look at the tragedy of Jacob and Esau. Each child is unique and different. Each is to love and be loved because they are special.
3. **Pushing achievements.** Push them in the area of achievement until they never have a sense of having accomplished anything. Nothing is ever enough. You demand Bs when they get Cs. When they get Bs, you

- want all As They feel that they can never satisfy you.
4. **Overindulgence.** Give them everything they want and if they cant get what they want, they get angry.
 5. **Discouragement.** Just remind them all the time that they are useless and can never amount to anything, that they are in the way. Don't give any rewards or approval. Don't do any nice things for them, don't honour them. You'll destroy their initiative, incentive, motivation.
 6. **Make them feel like they are an intrusion in your lives.** You make them feel that you have sacrificed a lot for them. So you leave them to fend for themselves. Don't let them get in your way because you have to do your stuff.
 7. **Failing to allow them to grow up.** By not letting them make mistakes. You see some children spill milk and it looks like the parents are facing the holocausts. Don't expect perfection just progress.
 8. **Neglect.** The story of Absalom is the story of neglect. You need to be a part of your child's life and let him be a part of yours – be involved in their lives.
 9. **Bitter words and physical cruelty.** Your tongue is so much sharper than a child's. Your sarcasm and ridicule can slice them up.
 10. **Wife who refuses to submit to her husband in love** as to Christ will destroy the whole *authority principle* of a child's life. The husband who refuses to love his wife as Christ loved the church will destroy the whole *submission principle* in the child's life. The family just needs to be as God says it should be that the husband loves his wife and the wife submits to her husband in love. They love each other. They raise the children in the things of Christ. They don't provoke them to anger. In the end, the child is a blessing, a joy, a comfort, a consolation that God intended.
 11. **Set an example and live with it.** If a child learns with criticism, he learns to condemn

We don't want to provoke our children to bitterness, anger, discouragement. We are to raise them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

“But bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” How do we nurture and admonish the children? We use discipline and instruction to do so. John MacArthur explains the meaning of discipline and instruction in this manner. Discipline means to rear a child and it implies training. Training means rules and regulations enforced by rewards and punishments. That's what we have to do with a child. As parents, we set the standard and follow it by being an example, we then hold the child to it. If the child adheres to the standards, then he is rewarded. If he violates it, then he faces the punishment or consequences. Discipline then is training by rules and regulations enforced by rewards and punishment. And we adhere to God's standard of right behaviour. As parents, we have to live by it, hold the child to it and reward

him when he follows it and punish him when he doesn't. What about the word instruction? It simply means teaching with warning, that is, admonition. It's actually verbal instruction with a view of judgement. As parents, we warn the child and inform him of the consequences beforehand.

Suzanna Wesley says that the parent who studies to subdue self-will in his child works together with God in the renewing and saving of the child's soul. But the parent who indulges in self-will does the devil's work, makes religion impractical, salvation unattainable, and does all that is in him to drown his child's soul and body forever.

John MacArthur emphasises that as parents, ***we have to have a standard, we live by that standard, we hold the child to that standard*** and all these in an environment where mum and dad love each other and love the child. Then you have got the makings of godly children.

A mother may look back at her life and say if I can do it all over again how would I change it?

She will probably say I would –

- love my husband more in front of my children.
- laugh with my children more at my mistakes and joys.
- listen more even to the littlest child.
- be more honest about my own weaknesses, never pretending perfection, admitting I was wrong.
- pray differently for my family. Rather than focussing on them, I should focus on me.
- do more things together with my children.
- be more encouraging.
- bestow more praise.
- pay more attention to little things, deeds and words of thankfulness
- share God more intimately out of every ordinary thing of every day.

When we still have a little shade from the trees of the past, it would be well if parents will again commit themselves to planting some for the future.

If the child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.

If the child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.

If the child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.

If the child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.

If the child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.

If the child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.

If the child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.

If the child lives with fairness, he learns justice.

If the child lives with security, he learns to have faith.

If the child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.

If the child lives with acceptance and friendship, he learns to find love in the world.

Anonymous

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There will be NO Sunday School next Lord's Day.

**28 Nov Reformation Seminar
O For a Closer Walk with Christ
Rev Jack Sin**

All SS teachers and students are encouraged to attend this seminar organized by Combined Fellowships