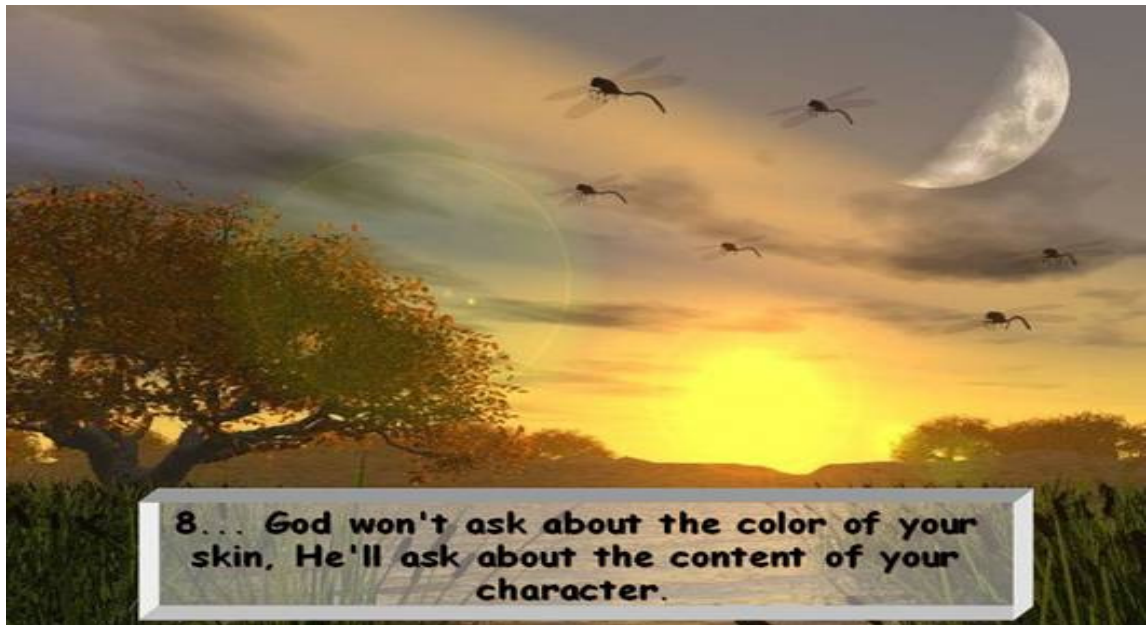


A Biblical Introduction to Parenting



Graham F. Watts, Sr.

VISION: To hear the midnight cry, “The bridegroom comes, go out to meet Him” (Matthew 25:6) and become like Him when I see Him as He is (1 John 3:2).

MISSION: Purify myself even as Christ is pure (1 John 3:3), to be glad, to rejoice, give honor to Christ and be ready for the marriage of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7).

VALUES: Follow the Lamb wherever He goes (Revelation 14:4), be without fault before God (Revelation 14:5), be perfect even as my Father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48), wear the Lamb’s fine, clean and white linen (Revelation 19:8) do righteously (1 John 3:10) and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8).

OVERALL AIM: Studies presented here unveil Bible knowledge to inquiring minds to prompt the following inquiries: “Are our feet on the rock of ages? Are we one with Christ as He is one with the Father” (John 10:30 in Evangelism, {Ev} 199.1)? Am I crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20)?

26 **PURPOSE/REASON FOR/WHY**

27
28 The focus here is on development of spiritual, parenting skills.

29
30 **OBJECTIVES/WHAT WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH**

31
32 At the end of this study, participants are equipped to assess their
33 readiness for spiritual parenting and to seek training, where needed!

34
35 **SIGNIFICANCE: SO WHAT**

36
37 “Direct your children onto the right path; when they are older, they
38 will not leave it” (Proverbs 22:6, New Living Translation, NLT).
39 Joseph and Mary exemplified this counsel by helping Jesus grow strong
40 in spirit, filled with wisdom and the grace of God (Luke 2:33-34, 39-
41 40). Elkanah and Hannah did the same with Samuel as he grew in favor
42 with God and men (1 Samuel 2:18-19, 21, 26). Abraham and Sarah also
43 did the same for youthful and athletic Issac, who serenely submitted to
44 the role of sacrificial lamb with his aging father (Genesis 22:2-12).
45 Parents must learn in the school of Christ before becoming trainers!

46
47 **BACKGROUND CONTEXT**

48
49 Board certification follows apprenticeship, residency or internship.
50 Educational disciplines concerned with quality of professional services
51 will not grant legal permission to practice without successful mastery
52 of a set of skills. Yet, in one of life’s most important roles, too
53 many people enter parenthood with limited role clarity or child
54 development training; and are ill-prepared, lacking requisite knowledge
55 and skills to successfully aid the development of future adults
56 committed, as children, to the their care and supervision. This
57 background prepared the way for the study question that follows.

58 **STUDY QUESTION**

59

60 What **spiritual** skills help parents train children to love and obey God?

61

62 **ANSWER SOURCE: HOLY BIBLE**

63

64 1. **Parents must be free from the dominion of sin to train children to**65 **love and obey God.** We must do more before marriage and during

66 marriage to prepare people for parenting. If captive to sin, we are

67 susceptible to wars and fights that rage within the mind (James 4:1).

68 This biblical worldview appears unpopular and outdated, but God calls

69 us to stand at the crossroads and seek the ancient paths (Jeremiah

70 6:16, NIV). Why is this necessary? "...The heart of the sons of men

71 is full of evil; madness is in their heart while they live..."

72 (Ecclesiastes 9:3 & Matthew 9:4). And because evil resides in the

73 mind, "The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked..." (Proverbs

74 12:20 & Jeremiah 17:9). Moreover, "The natural heart is in enmity

75 against God, not subject to the law of God and neither can it be"

76 (Romans 8:7). Hence, "It is not in the way of man who walks to

77 direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). "[And] because sentence against

78 an evil work is not executed speedily; the heart of the sons of men

79 is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes 8:11) and their

80 thoughts imagine that "...No evil shall come upon [them]" (Jeremiah

81 23:17 & Zephaniah 1:12). "[So] evil people ...refuse to hear [God's]

82 word [and] walk in the imagination of their [evil] heart..., [following

83 their] own devices" (Jeremiah 13:10 & 18:12). Parents, like people,

84 will do evil unless they set their heart to seek the Lord (read 2

85 Chronicles 12:14). Parents must turn their hearts unto the Lord and

86 experience renewal (read Joel 2:13-19) to prepare themselves for

87 creating a family environment in which children can grow and receive

88 the blessings of the Lord (read Judges 13:10-24). Parental

89 conversion is a key step in raising God fearing children.

90 2. **Parents must do what is right in the eyes of the Lord and by example,**
91 **train children to love and obey God.** The lifestyle God presented to
92 King Zedekiah (Jeremiah 21:1-8): doing “what is just and right,
93 rescuing from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed
94 and doing no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless or the
95 widow...” (Jeremiah 22:3, NIV & Zechariah 7:10 & 8:17) is a model for
96 parents (read Exodus 22:21; 23:9; Leviticus 19:34; Deuteronomy 10:19;
97 Ephesians 2:12). And as God promised Zedekiah benefits of obedience:
98 “...kings who sit on David’s throne will come through the palace gates
99 riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied by their officials and
100 their people (Jeremiah 22:4, NIV); similarly, when forces war against
101 us, aiming to destroy our children as Nebuchadnezzar wanted to do to
102 Zedekiah’s kingdom (Jeremiah 21:1-2), the strong arm of the Lord (1
103 Kings 8:42) will fight those who fight us and He will save our
104 children (Isaiah 49:25, New Living Translation, NLT). And when God
105 saves our children, they will love and obey Him because God will work
106 in them to will and to do of His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).
107 Thus, social justice--the creation of community environments that are
108 characterized by honesty, fairness, safety and security
109 (http://sjti.org/home_professional.html)--is an important parenting
110 skill, which teaches by modeling so that children learn by
111 observation during the developmental years. Hence, the Lord says,
112 “Keep judgment; do justice... and keep [your] hand from doing any evil”
113 (read Isaiah 56:1-2 & Psalms 141:4) because either the blessings of
114 obedience (Deuteronomy 28:1-14) or the curses of rebellion and
115 disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-45) will fall on you and upon your
116 posterity (read Exodus 34:6-7; Psalms 103:17-18). Too many people,
117 including parents perish because they reject and therefore lack
118 heavenly knowledge (Hosea 4:6) when “...The Lord [freely] gives wisdom,
119 knowledge and understanding” (Proverbs 2:6, NIV). Dear reader,
120 revealed knowledge belongs to us and to our children that we may do
121 all the words of God’s law (Deuteronomy 29:29).

122 3. **Parents must develop the tongue of the learned to speak words in**
123 **season to train children to love and obey God (read Isaiah 50:4).**

124 Children are also stressed by life challenges; hence they have an
125 emotional side that must be nurtured and protected. So, fathers who
126 receive the tongue of the learned are able to give "A soft answer
127 [that] turns away wrath [instead of] grievous words [that] stir up
128 anger" (Proverbs 15:1). By doing this, they obey the divine command
129 to **NOT** discourage children by inciting wrath [i.e., great anger]
130 (Ephesians 6:4 & Colossians 3:21). The natural law of interpersonal
131 communication says that "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth
132 speaks (Matthew 12:34; 15:19; Mark 7:21 or Luke 6:45). Therefore,
133 when the heart, a.k.a., mind is under the control of the prince of
134 the power of the air, the works of the flesh, which includes wrath,
135 is made manifest (Ephesians 2:2-3 & Hebrews 3:12). In contrast, when
136 the heart is governed by the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit,
137 which includes gentleness, even in speech, is made manifest
138 (Galatians 5:22) and the spoken word appears like apples of gold in
139 settings of silver" (Proverbs 25:11, New American Standard Bible,
140 NASB). Is your speech sound that it cannot be condemned (Titus 2:8)?
141 Are you filled with your own self-generated righteousness (Isaiah
142 64:6) rather than the righteousness of Christ, which comes from God
143 (Isaiah 54:17 & Romans 3:21-22), which empowers the human mind to
144 study how to answer (Proverbs 15:28)? Are you drawing near to God
145 with full assurance of faith, having your heart sprinkled from an
146 evil conscience and your body washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:22)?

147

148 **ANSWER SOURCE: SACRED WRITINGS:**

149

150 We are pursuing answers to the question: What spiritual skills help
151 parents train children to love and obey God? More answers follow!

152

- 153 1. **Parents who avoid impulsive speech train children to love and obey**
 154 **God (read Proverbs 29:20).** “It is a parent's duty to speak right
 155 words. Day by day, parents should learn in the school of Christ...,
 156 then, the story of God's everlasting love will be repeated in the
 157 home... to the tender flock. Thus, before reason is fully developed,
 158 children may catch a right spirit from their parents” (Child
 159 Guidance, {CG} 26.5). By this method, a barrage of ill spoken words
 160 will be silenced and “...Every [parent will] be swift to hear [and]
 161 slow to speak...” (James 1:19); and instead of reacting to situations,
 162 will “Cheer [the children along] with encouraging words...” (God's
 163 Amazing Grace, {AG} 226.4) [rather than disrupt] “The harmony of the
 164 domestic circle... by hasty words [or] abusive language. [A] smile of
 165 pleasure, one peaceful approving word, spoken in the spirit of
 166 meekness, would be a power to soothe, to comfort and to bless.
 167 ...[This can only occur when] the natural [person] dies and the new
 168 [person], which after God is created in righteousness and true
 169 holiness [arises in] Christ Jesus...” (2 Corinthians 5:17 & Ephesians
 170 4:24 in AG 226.5). Then, parents, through the grace of God, will
 171 love and obey God and teach their children to do likewise.
 172
- 173 2. **Parents who make carefully study of the early training of children**
 174 **can train them to love and obey God.** “We need to make the education
 175 of our children a business [i.e., forethought and strategic planning
 176 should go into childrearing], for **their salvation depends largely upon the**
 177 **education given them in childhood.** Parents and guardians must themselves
 178 maintain purity of heart and life, if they desire their children to
 179 be pure. As fathers and mothers, we should train and discipline
 180 ourselves. Then as teachers in the home, we can train our children,
 181 preparing them for the immortal inheritance” (CG 27.1). “Your
 182 children are God's property, bought with a price. Be very
 183 particular, O fathers and mothers, to treat them in a Christlike

184 manner" (CG 27.2). "The youth should be carefully and judiciously
 185 trained for **the wrong habits formed in childhood and youth often cling to the entire life-**
 186 **experience.** May God help us to see the necessity of beginning right"
 187 (CG 27.3) [and starting early]. A kilogram of prevention is worth a
 188 million kilograms of cure.

189
 190
 191 3. **Parents must continuously seek wisdom from the Lord, Jesus to train**
 192 **children to love and obey God.** "If any person lack wisdom, let
 193 him/her ask God who gives to all liberally... and it shall be given
 194 him/her" (James 1:5). "Teach the children that the true adorning is
 195 not outward [in] '...plaiting the hair, ...wearing gold or of putting on
 196 of apparel; but let it be the [inner person] of the heart, in that
 197 which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet
 198 spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price' (1 Peter 3:3, 4
 199 in Special Testimonies on Education, {SpTEd} 69.2). If children are
 200 permitted to have their own way, they will soon become selfish,
 201 loving pleasure, loving to be praised... ..The eye needs to be
 202 educated or the child will find pleasure in beholding evil. The
 203 tongue needs to be educated [so no] ...word of disrespect... passes the
 204 lips... If children are not taught to love, respect and obey their
 205 parents in the fear of the Lord, how can they be led to love God
 206 (SpTEd 69.3)? "They should be trained to be obedient, upright and
 207 practical, doing their best in everything, and at the same time to be
 208 content with the small, helpful duties and with the pleasures and
 209 experiences natural to their years" (SpTEd 70.1). "...Thoughts and
 210 impressions stamped on the mind of the child.. are well-nigh
 211 ineffaceable. When reason is awakening, the mind is most
 212 susceptible; and so the very first lessons are of great importance.
 213 ...If they are of the right stamp, and if, as the child advances in
 214 years, they are followed up with patient perseverance, the earthly
 215 and eternal destinies will be shaped for good" (SpTEd 71.2).

216 SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS: This study examined child rearing. The question
217 that focused the study asked: What **spiritual** skills help parents train
218 children to love and obey God? In this study, we limited our discovery
219 to six easy skills: 1) Freedom from the dominion of sin, 2) Doing what
220 is right in the sight of the Lord, 3) Procurement of the tongue of the
221 learned, 4) Avoid impulsive speech, 5) Make careful study of the early
222 training of children and 6) continuously seek God for wisdom. Because
223 it is of little redeeming value to engage in Bible study merely for
224 information, subsequent paragraphs follow that make a practical
225 application of the truths set forth here.

226

227 **DISCUSSION: WHAT DO THESE THINGS MEAN?**

228

229 We are living in a time comparable to the days of Noah. The wickedness
230 of humanity is again approaching climax. It unclear what percentage of
231 the thoughts of human minds imagine only evil continually (Genesis 6:5
232 & Matthew 24:37). What we do know however is violence and abuse of
233 children by parents and adults is both a societal and public health
234 concern. It would appear that some members of the human family forget
235 that children are a heritage of the Lord (Psalms 127:3); therefore,
236 very egregious crimes are committed against children. For example, in
237 2002, the impact of child abuse and neglect on a daily basis in United
238 States alone accounted for nearly four deaths to children and more than
239 2,450 survivors per day. Of survivors, 7% were not nurtured as a child
240 (http://pediatrics.about.com/od/childabuse/a/05_abuse_stats.htm). But
241 God who blesses human reproductive systems to permit birthing (Genesis
242 20:17-18) is ready, willing and able to guide parents in aiding the
243 development of children into healthy, functioning adults. But despite
244 the availability of spiritual resources, too many people enter upon the
245 work of parenting with inadequate training and some opt for drive-
246 through premarital counseling, which cannot fill the gap in knowledge

247 and skill deficits of those anxious to consummate the marriage. A more
 248 serious preparation, begun years in advance of marriage or parenting or
 249 refresher courses or self-study holds promise to raise the skill level
 250 of people to become a helping community for raising healthy children
 251 because it does take a village to raise a child.

252

253 **CONCLUSIONS: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

254

255 **God's people are destroyed for lack of knowledge because they have**
 256 **rejected it (Hosea 4:6), but it does not have to be this way.** Parents
 257 and would-be parents, you "...Are [or will be] dealing with human minds
 258 at the most interesting and impressible period of... development" (SpTEd
 259 69.1). The developmental outcome of children should not be left to
 260 chance or guess work. The word of the Lord is precise on this subject
 261 matter: "Train-up a child in the way s/he should go; and when s/he is
 262 old, s/he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). God does not
 263 expect us to do this work alone; hence, He has a plethora of knowledge,
 264 skills and values to resource current and would-be parents for the
 265 parenting role if they enter into spiritual partnership with Him, seek
 266 His wisdom and in all their ways, acknowledge Him (Proverbs 3:6). We
 267 also have this promise: "He guides the humble in what is right and
 268 teaches them His way" (Psalms 25:9, NIV). Are you willing to be taught
 269 of the Lord in your parenting role? Parents who receive instructions
 270 from the Lord about parenting can be confident that "...All thy children
 271 shall be taught of the Lord and great shall be the peace of thy
 272 children" (Isaiah 54:13). "[Parents], if you want the blessings of
 273 God, do as did Abraham. Repress the evil and encourage the good; some
 274 commanding may be necessary in the place of consulting the inclination
 275 and pleasure of the children" (Child Guidance, {CG} 234.1). "Those
 276 who... make no earnest effort to purify the family or the church... are
 277 just as responsible for the evils [that result]... as if the acts had
 278 been [their] own" (CG 235.4).

279 **CALL TO ACTION: WHAT SHALL WE DO?**

280 Parents commit wholly to the way of the Lord and He will establish you
281 as His holy people if you walk in His ways (Deuteronomy 28:9). While
282 you engage in parenting, "...Give your children to the Lord and ever keep
283 before their minds that they belong to him..., [which you can only do if
284 you, yourself belong to the Lord (read 1 Corinthians 6:19)]. [As]
285 ...Hannah [and Elkanah] dedicated Samuel to the Lord... [an impressed
286 divine ownership on the lad], ...[do likewise with your children and
287 extraordinary] ...possibilities ...[await] a child whose parents co-operate
288 with God, [practicing spiritual child rearing competencies while] doing
289 their appointed work" (SpTEd 71.3). If you are a current parent, seek
290 divine counsels, skills and wisdom to immediately put them into
291 practice as you raise your children to love and obey God. If you
292 desire to be a parent, follow Proverbs 3:5 & 6, seek divine counsel and
293 learn and practice parenting skills before you enter the parenting
294 role. "...Parents create the atmosphere of the home circle and... children
295 partake of the same spirit...; [therefore], make your home atmosphere
296 fragrant with tender thoughtfulness" (Mind, Character and Personality,
297 Volume 2, {2MCP} 500.4). "As you deal kindly and tenderly with your
298 children, they and you will receive the blessing of the Lord" (2MCP
299 501.3).

300