

## MARRIAGE & FAMILY, PART 3

As we continue this Marriage & Family Bible study, let's turn our attention to child rearing. The whole concept of child rearing is unique to human beings, and God specifically designed it this way. Unlike animals, who by God-given instinct can relatively quickly learn to walk, hunt, and live on their own, we were all born with a 100% dependence on our parents to take care of us. However, over about a 20-year time period, this complete dependence must convert to a nearly 100% independence from parents so our adult children can leave home and begin their own families. Thus the process starts all over again.

Therefore, in order to morph our dependent children into independent adults, children must learn a significant amount of information. In contrast to animals, who possess inborn instinct, children learn by instruction and example. To facilitate this process, God designed a simple yet profound structure of parents being accountable to God and children being accountable to their parents. More than just merely gaining skills to survive, God wants our children to learn how to become like Him, by serving Him and serving others.

The parental responsibility God grants us is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, we have the ability to powerfully guide our children in the ways of the Lord, using the Bible and our Godly example to firmly implant God's righteousness into our children. On the other hand, our bad example is just as powerful of a tool to work destruction in our children's lives. The power of example further extends its reach as our children learn from others. Everything from personal tastes, definitions, personality traits, mannerisms and behaviors are absorbed by our children by the example and teaching of anybody with whom they come into contact. This is why it's so critical that we as parents strongly influence the environment of our children.

Many would agree that there is no more challenging, yet important, responsibility as being Godly parents who raise Godly children who, in turn, become Godly adults. In light of this point, we are fortunate that God makes a promise to all parents in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

### Child Rearing

1. What was God's purpose in creating male and female with the ability to become one flesh? (Genesis 1:27-28)
2. What is God's view of children? (Psalm 127:3-5, Matthew 19:13-14)
- 3.

What expectations does God have for us as parents? (Ephesians 6:4, Deuteronomy 6:6-8)

4. Why does God specifically direct the command in Ephesians 6:4 to fathers? What kind of man does God want a father to be? (Genesis 18:19)
  
5. What type of household management is God expecting from fathers? (1 Timothy 3:4)
  
6. What spiritual principles in 1 Timothy 5:8 can you apply to the way you raise children? In what non-monetary ways would God have us provide for our household?
  
7. If you don't raise your kids in a Godly way, what will be the end result? (Proverbs 10:1, 17:21, 17:25, 29:15)
  
8. What specific things should we do to implement Deuteronomy 6:6-8?
- 9.

What other commands or examples of good parenting does God give us?

Matthew 7:9-11

Colossians 3:21

Proverbs 22:6

Proverbs 29:17

1 Thessalonians 2:11

10. In what ways do parents provoke their children?

11. What are the specific commands given to children? (Exodus 20:12, Proverbs 1:8-9, Proverbs 13:1, Proverbs 23:22, Ephesians 6:1-3, Colossians 3:20, 2 Timothy 3:14-17) What promise is given to children who honor their mother and father?

12.

What do you do when your children do not obey?

13. What is the purpose of discipline and chastening? (Proverbs 19:18, 22:15, 23:13-14, Hebrews 12:5-11, Ecclesiastes 8:11)

*Point to Ponder:* Mercy is a spoiler to those who don't know judgment!

14. With what attitude should we discipline our children? (Proverbs 3:11-12, 13:24)

15. What promises are given to those children who receive discipline/chastening? What about those who do not receive it? (Proverbs 4:1, 12:1, 13:18, 15:10-12)

16. Besides providing teaching and instruction about God, what is the most important gift we can give to our children?