

Child Training II

Part 7: Negative Training

Negative training actually accomplishes the same goal as failing to obey Pr 22:6,15 — both result in death. The parent and the child will suffer in death for the incomplete deed of failing to attain to Gen 18:19.

If foolishness is not driven far from your child by the time he is a youth, then *Bar Mitzvah* is not for him, since the Holy Spirit will not entrust Himself to a foolish, untrained youth. Parents who have raised a fool may look to a *Bar Mitzvah* celebration as a miraculous remedy for their neglect, making it only a meaningless ritual. But nothing will destroy us more effectively than allowing *Bar Mitzvah* to become a ritual. It can't be a quick fix. *Bar Mitzvah* is the culmination of years of diligence in training by parents who prove to be Abraham's seed (Gen 18:19 and Jn 8:39).

Negative training is accomplished by *not* being diligent (Pr 13:24) with prompt action to correct your son. Heb 12:7 means that the Father disciplines promptly, without delay.¹ That is what fathers do. All who do not are not fathers by God's standard, but are as Ex 20:5 — a generation of those who hate God. The "father" who does not diligently administer correction and restraint is not producing the Male Child, nor fulfilling 1 Jn 3:8 or Mt 1:21 or Rev 11:15. Ex 20:5-6 is the restoration of all things in Mal 4:6.

The epitome of negative training in the world is pictured in a pot-bellied pop sitting on a chair in front of a TV watching worthlessness and his offspring sitting down by him on the floor of a messy living room strewn with popcorn, banana peels, plastic baseball bat, comic books, soda pop, etc.

There are many forms or ways parents can be negative trainers. Negative training is to *not* do what Dt 6:6-7 says — *you shall teach them diligently to your children... you shall talk of them...* A parent is commanded to teach his child the word of God *diligently*, to talk of His

¹ "Late is hate; love is early." See "Discipline on the First Command," May 8, 1997.

commandments. To do less than God commands will result in negative training. Negative training is to go to sleep while we are talking of these commands. Negative training is to *not be diligent* in teaching. How does a parent diligently teach his child all these things?

Diligence — Pr 4:23; 8:17; 12:24,27; Rom 12:8,11; 2 Cor 7:11²; 8:8; 2 Pet 1:5; 3:14; Dt 28:1; 6:7. *Diligence* means eagerness, earnestness, care, forwardness, being devoted with painstaking effort to accomplish what is undertaken, to esteem highly the command in Dt 6:7, perseveringly attentive, steady and earnest in application to a subject, laborious. *Diligence* is the opposite of negligence. To neglect Dt 6:7 is a sin unto death (Heb 10:26), causing your children to be untaught, unlearned, never to know God's word more than any other subject matter (Pr 12:28; Jn 8:31,51; Dt 28:1,16 — *cursed* as Dt 27:15-26; *curse* is the opposite of *blessing*, Dt 28:60-62).

We were all brought up in the world by what we would judge to be negative training in some way or another. Our parents were always training us, but not according to God's standard, even for the nations. How much negative training did we receive when we were put in front of a television set? Would we ever condemn the world for something we would do ourselves? (Rom 2:1-3). How much negative training have we given to our own children at Grandma's house? How much negative training do we allow our parents to give our children, our *holy* children? Our children have been set apart from before birth, *dedicated* just like John the Baptist was, and even our own Savior and Master Yahshua was at 40 days, circumcised at eight days. And then we take them to the ones who trained *us* up to be all that we were before we were found at a *Grateful Dead* show — that was the result of our training.

² #4710 is here (and in 2 Cor 8:8) translated earnestness in the NAS and AV. It is rendered as diligence as much it is as earnestness in the NAS. #4710 also means haste, as fathers discipline their children promptly, without delay, after any act of disobedience.

Negative Training by Default

As parents we are always training our children, one way or another, positive or negative. Simply because we are in the position of rulership our children receive their direction from us, right or wrong. Parents set the direction for the *way* a child should go or should not go. Parents set the standards for their acceptable conduct, either by what they allow (training by default) or by what they intentionally teach (overt training). For example: If a child is rude, inconsiderate, and selfish, he has been *trained* to be that way. If a child is lazy, sloppy, or is disrespectful and a troublemaker, he has been *trained* to be that way — to *keep the way of “the devil”* (the negative of Gen 18:19), as all sons of their father, “the devil” are trained (Jn 8:44). That applies to a Christian who *claims* to be of his father Abraham (Jn 8:37-47 and 9:41).

In Jn 8:44 our Master Yahshua knew what was in the hearts of the people and He could trace their actions, their ways, the way they had been trained and commanded by their source or father, because they wanted to do the desires of their father, “the devil.” After we are fully trained we will be like the one who has trained us (Lk 6:40; Heb 12:11) — yielding the peaceable fruit of either self-righteousness or true righteousness, according to whoever our source or teacher was (Mt 7:15-20).

Our parents did not intentionally train us to have these negative characteristics, yet it is very easy to train a child in these undesirable behavior patterns by default. It was so easy just to put your child in front of the TV screen. Was this intentional or unintentional training, to go in the way of their source? When parents do this, their child is trained to think that whatever he wants to do is alright, for he is trained not only by his mother, but also by “Howdy Doody”, his teacher and instructor. This is negative training by default, the way most of us were raised (Pr 22:6). We are so thankful that we were sought out and surrounded (Isa 52:12).

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 lives where we don’t see our own faults — some more than others (Mt 18:15). These areas tend to block us from training the same

areas out of our children. This is why it is our own responsibility to *pray* for our eyes to be *opened* (just as we pray for our brother's eyes to be opened – Eph 1:18)— we may be seeing our children as *trees* that grow on their own.

A parent who has poor table manners³ is not likely to allow himself to see and correct the atrocious bad manners of his child. A parent who gossips and runs down others is unlikely to recognize and correct this trait in his child. Ex 20:5-6 is always at work. It is difficult to correct negative traits in our children that would condemn ourselves. Parents may teach the principles of right conduct, but if that teaching goes contrary to their own practice, they will not enforce those standards.

On the other hand, it is possible to be overly critical in the area of blind spots. This is *hypocritical* and your child will see it and grow very disrespectful of you, disregarding anything you say or teach. The parent will be rejected by the child. Parents can be successful in training their children only the standards they themselves keep in their own lives.

Default training also occurs when parents do not enforce even the standards by which they live. This may be because the parents are preoccupied with their own problems or duties, or are weary of the child's need for constant correction and just plain laziness. How often do you allow your child to get away with an action or an attitude for which you would normally correct him? *Training requires consistency, and consistency pays!* The more consistent you are, the sooner your child will become trained and the less frequently you will have to correct him.

Default training is often the result of leaving correction to someone else. A father does this when he leaves all the correction, training, teaching, and storytelling (Dt 6:6-7) to the mother, even when the need for correction (etc.) is right before him. Default training is done by the mother when she refuses to correct the child while the father is around in an attempt to force him into action. But proper training comes to the child when both parents are “honorable” in his eyes, by reinforcing each other. The child needs to see this reinforcement of one another in order

³ We don't necessarily subscribe to Amy Vanderbilt's way, but to common sense.

to come against the onslaught of the enemy against him. This brings peace to him. But if only one parent is willing to train up the child in the way he should go, can it actually happen? Pr 22:6 — The commandment is to *both* parents, as the commandment in Ex 20:5-6 is to *both* parents for the child (Col 3:20; Eph 6:1). *Parents* is *PLURAL*. A child cannot honor his parents when only one is not training him by default.

Parents need to be careful they do not depend on the rabbi, teacher, elder, or an older child to handle their own responsibility of training. An older child can be of great assistance in helping the parents with the younger children, but he should never be allowed to correct or discipline or be made responsible for the training of the younger brother or sister alone. The delegation of parental responsibility to a child can create confusion of roles, insubordination, as well as tension between children. Only the one to whom God has specifically delegated authority should ever exercise the power of that position. God holds only parents accountable for disciplining and training their children. This can be delegated to the training teacher or rabbi in the classroom setting as long as the child knows that his parents are in full agreement and approve of their training teacher or rabbi.

Overt Negative Training

Even worse than negative training by default is *overt* negative training. This kind of training happens when parents actually train negative behavior patterns into their child. This overt negative training results from the way parents allow their children to react to their instruction. A child can be trained that obedience is required only after a command has been repeated a second or third time.

The child wants to play and he does not want to expend effort doing what has been commanded. After a time interval the parent realizes his instruction was not heeded... “Johnny, I told you to stop playing and come inside. Do you here me?” Johnny may or may not answer, depending on which he has been trained to do. (Your child should be trained always to acknowledge your instruction so that you know that he has heard and understood you.) If Johnny

learns to respond to only repeated instruction, he is being trained to wait until every instruction has been repeated at least once before obeying. The parent is also being trained by the child accordingly. If a child is able to get away with ignoring the first command, he will attempt to ignore even repeated commands. He has probably experienced the parents' forgetting between repeats and can look forward to possibly escaping the task altogether.

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. "Johnny, I told you to come in ten minutes ago!" (with a loud voice). The parent may yell at the top of his voice after the child has already ignored the first two commands. Johnny learns that he needs to obey only when he is yelled at or threatened.

Obedience (Col 3:20; Eph 6:1) means to do what one is told. It does not mean to respond to threats. 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 (a son of disobedience).⁴ This training occurs when there has been seldom if any enforcement by the parent giving the instruction, especially a mother who passes all enforcement over to the father. It also happens when one parent treats a child with favoritism. Each parent must individually establish his own right of rule over his child.

When a parent threatens his child with "do it or else" and the *else* seldom follows, the child is being trained that the parents' word has no value.⁵ This is the breakdown of all authority, even the word of God, for the child is being trained to despise authority and that no one's authority is any better than that of his parents. Even Jn 3:36 is just another empty threat. The way a child first views God is through his parents. They are the authority that God has placed over him to train him in obedience and respect.

⁴ As Christians are trained to completely ignore obeying the "hard sayings" of the Gospel, lest they be guilty of "works salvation." This can also be how we are to the teachings for fear lest we be "under the law." The result of either justification is the same – the disobedience that keeps our Father's will from being done on earth as it is in heaven.

⁵ Value is defined as "the quality or fact of being excellent, useful, or desirable; valuation." It is also the "estimated or assessed worth."

It is vital that a child learns to trust your word. If follow-through is inconsistent, a child will make a game out of disobeying. If there is even the least chance that there will be no enforcement for not following instructions, he will play a game of “Russian Roulette.” It is amazing what a child will try to get away with to exert his will or fulfill his own desires.

A child can be trained to question or argue about every instruction given. A child must learn to respond to parents’ instruction immediately and without explanation. This type of response may save his life or prevent injury as the parent can instantly direct him away from danger. Parents do not owe their child an explanation for their instructions. He does not have to know why you want him to do it: you are the authority and have the right to direct his life and activities. When a child is allowed to make the parents justify their instruction, it undermines their authority and causes them to answer to the child instead of the child to them. Until a child learns *unquestioned* obedience it is better not to justify your instruction in advance. If you think it is necessary to explain your reasons, do so only *after* he has obeyed.

Parental Training (done by the child)

A clever child who is allowed to question his parents’ instruction can confuse the issue and thereby avoid obedience. He may turn your words back on you, “But you said...” While it is true that you will make some mistakes with the use of authority, it is not your child’s place to correct you. When a child is allowed to talk back or argue, he makes his parents pay a penalty for interfering in his life. If he makes the price high enough in unpleasantness, his parents may get off his back. Many parents who have trained their child to argue have done just that. They have let the child go his own way because they are tired of the battle or hassle, which they allowed in the first place.

A child can train his parents to wait until he decides when to obey. This is not obedience, but a subtle form of disobedience that is most often practiced by females. Whereas a boy is more likely to rebel in an overt manner, a girl often expresses her will by passive rebellion. When you

tell your child to do something and he or she responds by saying, “Just a minute,” you are being trained to wait on the child’s timing. The child has just said, “I will do your will when it becomes my will.” Mother tells daughter to go wash the dishes, and she responds, “Ok, Imma,” and then proceeds to wait ten more minutes. She may even wait until her imma tells her again. Then the child responds, “I’m on my way” as sweetly as possible. She, not the mother, has been in control of the situation as she has deliberately delayed in following instruction.

Passive rebellion also occurs when a child is able to cause his parents to submit to certain terms of obeying. These terms are usually in the form of bribery, as when the mother says, “If you pick up your mess, I will give you a surprise.” The condition for obedience is causing the parent to help in accomplishing the instruction, as in: “Let Imma help you pick up your mess.” That same imma will be doing her child’s homework when he refuses to follow the teacher’s instruction. Parents should never do that for which the child is held accountable. Parents must make their instruction clear, so as to make the *child* responsible and follow his instruction on his own.

A child can be trained to give an excuse for his disobedience or wrongdoing. An excuse is seldom the true reason for an action. Instead it is an attempt to justify or make right a wrong. When parents train a child to give excuses, they are also training him not to accept full responsibility for his own actions. He will grow up seeking others to blame for his failures instead of facing the true problem. He will not be able to become a *Bar Mitzvah*, for he will not be able to admit his need for a savior as he is used to justifying himself. Acceptance of full responsibility for one’s own thoughts, words, and deeds is one of the stepping stones to *Bar Mitzvah* and maturity. Without this acceptance, the child avoids the reality of personal shortcomings or wrongdoings, thereby nullifying his need for salvation.

The administration of justice is not based on the *why* of guilt, but the *fact* of guilt. Only after the child’s guilt has been firmly established as *fact* should parents attempt to analyze the *reason*. The reason why does not alter the fact of guilt. The child must be taught that circumstances are not justification for his wrongdoing.

One of the reasons why parents ask for an excuse is because they want the child to have one. They hope they will have sufficient justification to prevent conflict or confrontation. But conflict is necessary in training children.

The parents' pride also interferes with their desire to know the truth. A child's disobedience or wrongdoing can reflect on his parents. When parents look for excuses for their child's wrong, they may be trying to protect their own pride. If a child can excuse his actions, the parents can deceive themselves into not accepting any responsibility for the child's poor training.

Negative training results from parents' tolerance of their child's negative behavior and how they inadvertently train him to respond to their instructions. A child who is not trained to follow instruction promptly and correctly the first time has been allowed to exert his own will over that of his parents (or other authority). Parents who train in this way will be erratic in their enforcement. Sometimes they will allow their instruction to go totally unheeded, thus giving little value to their words. At other times, they will crack down inconsistently after the first, second, or third declaration, thus being unfair with their power.

And what is the solution? When your child happily follows your every instruction you can be proud of the reflection he has become. Confrontations will decrease and you will begin to have an improved relationship with your child. Knowing how *not* to train your child is important, but more important is knowing how *to* train him properly. The two facets of positive child training are:

- 1) Controlling, and
- 2) Teaching.

There can be no positive teaching without first positive controlling.