

Child Training II

Part 5: The Child's Nature

(What child training means)

God intends that any child born into this world be trained by his parents according to the standard of the Everlasting Covenant. Anything that breaks the covenant of conscience in a man violates God's intentions for mankind and his offspring.

Pr 29:15 — Can you imagine a child who is left to himself and has grown up this way, that is, without restraint, but given his own way right into adulthood? (1 Sam 3:13). Eli raised two sons to be evil. His sons are now adults, but Eli is being judged because as their parent he did not restrain their inclination to do evil. Eli should have used his parental authority to cause his sons' inclination to not have its full effect on them. If he had restrained them, they could have been lifted out from under this *bent way* in them to mold them into Satan's mold.

Eli was a gnostic¹ who was full of zeal for the Ark of God (1 Sam 4:13,18) but strangely unconcerned about nurturing godliness in his sons, like a man who has his nose buried in his Bible while his children are running wild, bringing shame to him (Pr 29:15), and he doesn't even notice or see the contradiction in his life (1 Tim 3:4-5).

Eli did not *make* his sons evil, but he did not prevent it. They made themselves vile. This teaches us that parents are responsible for their child's evil tendencies. A child left to himself or unrestrained by his parents is subject to the control of the evil one. The longer a child is allowed to grow up left to himself, or unrestrained, the more he becomes a child of disobedience, enslaved to selfish desires and indulgences. It is *cruel*² not to help our children to control themselves.

¹ A *gnostic* is one who is deceived into thinking that knowledge (Greek *gnosis*) alone has value, apart from its expression in a tangible reality (e.g., someone who *knows* the child training teachings, but does not in fact practice them, although he *thinks* he does).

² *Cruel* means disposed to give pain to others; inhuman; merciless; causing or fitted to cause, pain or grief.

The primary role of the parents is to train their children to have control of themselves. A parent must have this *limitless* authority over his own children in order to bring this about.

Restraining a child's bent ways is not all there is to child training, but until these bent ways in him are brought under control, there can be little, if any, positive training and teaching. The parent must act as the child's external control for him until he can be taught internal controls. He is dependent upon his parents to help control his flesh, so to speak, which seeks to enslave him. We even see as parents the tendency in us which exerts its evil influence to lead us astray by our own desires (Jms 1:14; Rev 12:9; 20:3,8). This helps us to know how much more our own children need us these first years of childhood until *Bar Mitzvah*, when the Holy Spirit becomes the controlling factor in their lives.

Keeping within our Normal Desires

The normal desires to eat can be distorted by the nature of sin to produce gluttony, as also normal desire for sex can be distorted to lust and pornography, etc. Even the simple desire to be accepted by others can be distorted to the point where the person will compromise what he knows is right because of the lust for approval. Jms 1:14 and Gal 5:24 — Satan uses lusts and desires to lead us astray, as well as the whole world.

You can look back to your childhood and remember the strong parental control of someone else who helped you to overcome these ways which Satan uses to destroy our conscience, to break the Everlasting Covenant (Isa 24:5-6), as the rest of the world has. You have the opportunity to help your own child as the Father helps us now by His Helper, to become a mature adult by learning how to control this bent way in us. Ex 20:5-6 — While we were young our parents helped us to not become so depraved as to not respond to the good news of our salvation.

Jms 1:14-15 — Even in the world this can apply to those who were not held back by parental authority from the bent ways in them, to sin as Rev 21:8 and Rom 1:24-30. Even in the Edah we can sin unto death (Jms 5:19-20). As Jms 1:21, this filthiness and wickedness must not be left in us. We must obey now our Father's word and submit to His Spirit in us.

The Stages of Childhood

The term *infant* is used to describe the first stage of childhood. This period begins with total dependence on the parents, specially the mother. The infant is defenseless and must constantly be cared for physically. He demands that every need be fulfilled instantly. During this period he develops a sense of security and bonding through the care he receives. This care is evidenced by holding the baby and attending to his needs, stimulating his responses, and keeping him warm and free from the pain of hunger, wetness, diaper pins, and any other discomfort.

The infant rapidly moves through this first stage as he develops strength. He begins to discover a sense of self-reliance in his increasing lack of dependency on others to fulfill his needs. He can no longer be considered an infant when he is able to express his independence by getting around on his own.

The term *child* is used to describe a little child in contrast to a youth in his teens. It is during this period that children will attempt to establish their own will as their only ruler. They can be expected to reject and fight against any restriction, especially if they are not restrained as an infant and wrapped in swaddling clothes. As a child they want freedom from any restriction. Their own desires will govern their actions as they seek to please only themselves.

When a child wants approval, he may do what others require of him for a time. When he wants attention, he may intentionally cause trouble to receive it. When he wants to express his own will, he will challenge any other person's will.

The child stage is when most of the behavior patterns are established for life. The patterns of respect for authority, respect for the rights of others, honesty, harmony, patience, self-control, study and work, concern for others, and personal contentment can all be developed during this period of childhood. Because of the formative nature of the child's mind during this stage, parents should establish and enforce rules for acceptable and unacceptable conduct.

The child stage somewhat overlaps the infant stage. As soon as the infant begins to exert his will, he can also be considered a child. By the time the child reaches *Bar Mitzvah* (around 12 or 13) he or she will have moved into the next stage of development — youth.

The term *youth* is used to describe the period from 13 to 20 years of age. During this period the individual personality develops. Personal interests and preferences emerge as the youth serves his own parents and begins to have his own identity as a disciple of Yahshua. At the same time, masculinity or femininity comes into prominence as the youth sexually matures. Now is the time that the youth needs to know the reason behind the rules he is required to obey — this becomes extremely important. A youth reaches out for more privileges, but at the same time his responsibilities constantly increase as the parents guide him to the proper course to adulthood with the counsel of the elders. During this time the youth seeks those whom he can look up to. This needs to be found first of all in his parents — those whom he can identify with and whose leadership (role model) he can follow. He has the need to be accepted and recognized as an *individual*. This is the time when the parents can have the *maximum* influence upon his thinking.

Depending upon how the parents handled the *child stage*, the *youth* will be prepared to know the scriptures and follow the parents' example at the minchah. The properly trained youth will begin to operate on his own internal controls, now having re-

ceived the Holy Spirit, and accepts increasing responsibility, and with it accountability for himself.

A youth who was not caused to come under the control of his parents as a child will rebel more and more violently at any attempt by his parents to restrict his total freedom. This youth could not become a *bar mitzvah*, so must be put outside of the community according to the council of elders judging the parents' failure. The youth who must now leave has established his own control over his parents and will or would increasingly exercise his dominion over them in order to satisfy his self-centered existence.

The term *adult* is used to describe a son or daughter 20 years old or older. The adult male, according to the Law, became fully accountable to God and to the nation in old Israel (Num 1:3-45; 1 Chr 23:24-27). The parents relinquish their parental authority over the adult or youth at marriage, or if they are not married by or at 21, to go where needed in the tribe or nation. No longer a youth, the adult comes to the end of his training period, bringing the parents great joy as he continues to honor his parents. If the parents have earned his respect for their character and wisdom, the young adult will continue to look to them for advice. But the parents have no authority over them to direct them. The director has retired, but with honors, and will be honored by their children forever and forever, throughout all eternity, *AMEN!*