

June 6, 1990

## **Child Training**

### ***Control and Teaching***

#### **Law**

*Col 3:20 – “Children, obey your parents in all things.”*

The word translated *obey* from the Greek is a command and means “to hear and obey.” In other words, this verse says children must do what they are told. This means that a parent’s word is *law* to their children. You may never have considered yourself to be someone who has the right to create law, but as far as your child is concerned, *your word is law*. If your child is disobedient to your word, he has broken the law you have set for him.

Even though this command is addressed to children, parents are the ones who are in charge, accountable for its fulfillment as long as the children are under their control. Our God always holds the ones in authority responsible for the actions of those under their rulership. The parents are accountable to Him for the obedience of their children. He has given the parents the power to enforce the child’s compliance to obey his parents *in all things*.

The boundary for parental authority is more extensive than any other. For the parents’ right to rule includes the power to *force* obedience to their will *in all things*. There is a difference in the Greek words translated *submit* and *obey*. The word *submission* speaks of the attitude of voluntary acceptance of authority, whereas *obedience* is compliance with the authority whether the subject wills or not. Parents have the right to rule in all things; they also have the power to enforce their child’s unwilling compliance to their commands.

#### **Beyond Parental Authority**

If a child will not obey his parents, the higher authority will need to come upon the child for judgment in support of the parents. Higher authority will always support

parental authority (Mt 15:4; Ex 21:15,17; Dt 21:18-21; 27:16; Pr 30:17). Rebellion against their authority will be extensive in the last days (2 Tim 3:2; Rom 1:32). Thus it must be strongly supported within the community.

The parents' faithful administration of YHWH's delegated authority will ensure a blessing for their children (Eph 6:2-3; Ex 20:12; Pr 3:1-2).

As a human authority, you will make many mistakes even if you desire to be right and just in every way. These mistakes can be from ignorance of what or how to deal with children, or they may be a result of your own sin. But an authority does not have to be perfect in his rulership. Obedience and respect for the power of rulership is often learned from what appears to be unfair or incompetent leadership. Parents are the authority, right or wrong. Do not allow the fact that you are human and subject to error hinder you from carrying out your responsibility with your child. YHWH knew you were imperfect when He gave you a child to rule over. Seeing your inadequacy should make you dependent on Him, not cause you to avoid your responsibility.

### **Responsibility**

Your children need to know that you are in charge. This means that you make the decisions, not the children. You are to decide when it is time for bed, what is to be eaten or not eaten, and what activities are permitted. These decisions belong to the parent *until the child has been trained to make the right decisions himself*. The parent even decides when and in what areas the child is allowed to make his own decisions.

Parents are authority figures and therefore cannot also be *pals* or *buddies* with a child who must become obedient to their rule. If the parents rule well when the child is growing up, there can be a life-time of friendship between them and the grown child. This can occur only after a child has been trained to meet his parent's standards.

Though some failing parents may want to pass the blame for their failure with their children to outside influences, it is actually the parent's responsibility to control

what influences their children. They may blame other children, grandparents, encounters with TV somewhere, guests who stayed in our home, etc., but all these things are actually the parents' responsibility to monitor. The responsibility rests on the parents.

Parents represent YHWH's authority and character to their children. The way parents handle their rulership is the way children will begin to think about YHWH and all other authorities under YHWH. If the child sees his parents as fair, he will consider that YHWH must also be fair. If his parents punish for wrong, then YHWH will punish for wrong. If his parents care for him, then YHWH must care for him. If his parents mean what they say, then YHWH must mean what He says.

### **Training**

*Training* means "the process by which the one being trained is caused to show the results of the training." Therefore, child training is the process used by parents that will cause a child to reach the objective for which he has been trained, from point A to point B.

To train the growth of a plant means to cause it to grow along a predetermined path, as along a trellis. To train an athlete means to cause him to become fit for an athletic contest, specifically to be a winner. To train an animal is to cause it to accomplish a certain function like race, work, etc. To train a person in a certain skill is to cause him to become proficient in the use of that skill.

Training is not completed unless the subject actually attains the intended purpose of the training process. Training alone is not just the process of teaching. If positive results are not obtained, training has not occurred. The child has to be trained in the way he should go, or else he will have nothing to depart from when he is old. If he is trained in the proper way, he will not depart.

Parents do not train their child by just telling him what they expect of him. Unless the child actually arrives at the point of functioning on his own in conformity to what he has been taught, he has not been trained. Telling is not training.

Pr 22:6 – “Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” The Hebrew word here translated *train* is translated as *dedicate* in every other passage where it occurs. To dedicate means “to renew, inaugurate, or initiate (*chanok*).” Parents are commanded by YHWH to initiate or start their child in a certain direction. He is to be set on a *new path*. The result of his training is for this new way to become the child’s own way of life.

The ancient root of this Hebrew word for training means *to make narrow* and even *to strangle*. In other words, parents are to restrict the path their children may follow (Ecc’cus 30:1-13).

Restricting a child’s nature is not all there is to child training. However, until the nature is brought under control, there can be little, if any, positive training. Parents must act as the external control over a child while he is developing his own internal controls. The parents’ role is not to remain as the child’s control for the rest of his life, but gradually to work themselves out of this job as early as possible. It is certainly a perversion for a parent to hate to see his child grow up. When the parent showers the children with kisses, loving to dress them in special clothes and make a fuss over how they look, the parent is actually working against YHWH’s purpose in training up a child. Children need to grow up and take over the control of their life.

A child who has been trained to be obedient to his parents will respect their position of authority and will thus be prepared to accept their instructions. His parents can then teach him moral values as well as academic instruction that matches his mental maturity. Parents of obedient children are in a position to teach whatever information they wish their children to possess.

Dt 6:6-7 – “...and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up.” The Hebrew word here translated *teach* means to *inculcate*. It means intensively to train His standards into the child by the use of repetition. The teaching is to be on a consistent basis and at every opportunity. Training is a constant process until the desired results are achieved. Positive teaching must be repeated time and time again since it runs counter to the natural inclination of the child. The word used for *child* here is not one specifying a certain age group but speaks of a *family relationship*. In other words, parents are responsible to *teach their children*.

Other Hebrew words are used in Dt 4:10 and 11:19 for teaching a child. This word means *to teach by intensive drill*. It is the same word that is used to describe the training of a soldier for war. The derivative of this word is the word for a *goad*, a stick sharp enough to penetrate an animal’s hide, used for prodding cattle or oxen. The prodding which this word suggests relates to child training. Parents may need to prod their child with a sharp rebuke to get the child’s attention and to cause him to go the direction he must go.

### **Negative Training**

Parents are training their children when they ignore their negative behavior traits. All parents do this to some extent. We all have blind spots – areas in our own life where we do not see our own faults. These areas tend to block us from training the same problems out of our children. 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. You will be successful ultimately in training only those standards you yourself attempt to maintain in your own life. This is why we need to be very sensitive to the advise and counsel of our brothers and sisters concerning our children’s training. This is the area

where all independent, isolated parents have fallen. For without the caring eyes of your brothers you will never be able to succeed in bringing your children beyond the point where you have fallen short.

Although the help of an older child can be very valuable, this can also be a means of negative training for the young child. They should never be allowed to correct or be made responsible for the training of the young child. The delegation of parental responsibility to a child can create confusion of roles, insubordination, as well as tension between children. The older child can watch over the younger, but only in closely supervised conditions where the parental authority can quickly intervene when training is necessary. If the older child uses the word *no* with the young one without following up with the rod if not obeyed, the young one will become dull to the word. The older child should be trained to lead the young one without commanding him, and to bring the young one immediately to the proper authority if he is rebellious.

Negative training also comes from not requiring obedience on the first command. If the child is allowed to get away with ignoring the first command, he will attempt to ignore even repeated commands. He has probably experienced the parent's forgetting between repeats and can thus look forward to possibly escaping the task altogether. The child should be trained always to acknowledge your instructions so that you know he has heard and understood them. Responses such as, "Yes, Imma," said with a right attitude, will help develop a proper respect in your child as well as tell you that he has heard your instructions.

A child can also be trained to question or reason about every instruction given to him. A child must initially learn to respond to the parent's instructions immediately without explanation. This type of response may prevent injury as the parent can instantly lead him away from danger.

Parents do not owe their child an explanation for their instructions. He does not need to know why you want him to do it, let alone agree with you. When a child is al-

lowed to make parents justify their instruction, it undermines the parents' authority and causes them to answer to the child instead of the child to them. Until a child learns unquestioning obedience, it is better not to justify your instructions in advance. If you think it is necessary to explain your reasons, do so only *after* he has obeyed.

A clever child who is allowed to question his parents' instructions can confuse the issue and thereby avoid obedience altogether. He may even turn your own words back on you: "But *you* said..." While it is true that you will make some mistakes with the use of your authority, it is not your child's responsibility or privilege to correct you.

Another form of negative training is to allow a child to not obey immediately. The child can actually train his parents to wait until he decides *when* to obey. This behavior is not true obedience, but a subtle form of disobedience which is most often practiced by little girls. Where a boy is more likely to rebel in an overt manner, a girl will often express her will by passive rebellion of this sort. When you tell your child to do something and she responds by saying, "Just a minute," you are being trained to wait for her timing. The child has just said, "I'll do your will when it becomes My will." Imma tells her daughter to go wash the dishes and she responds, "Okay, Imma," but then proceeds to wait several minutes – she is training her mother to wait. She may eventually go and do the dishes or she may wait until Imma asks again, whereupon she will say, "I was on my way," as sweetly as possible. She, not the mother, has been in control of the whole situation as she has deliberately delayed in following instructions.

A child can be negatively 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, to make right a wrong. Excuses are attempts to share or avoid altogether the responsibility for wrongdoing.

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.

## Why

It is not so important to ask a child *why* he disobeyed. The parent may be attempting to understand the reason, but the reason is not nearly as important as the fact of the deed. The administration of justice should not be 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 may be important for future training but the reason why does not alter the *fact* of guilt. A child must be taught that outside circumstances are no justification for his own wrong-doings.

One of the reasons parents ask for an excuse is because they inwardly want the child to have one. They hope there is sufficient justification to prevent any need for an unpleasant confrontation. It is natural to want to avoid confrontation. However, conflict is a necessary part of child training.

## Parental Pride

The parents' pride also interferes with their desire to know the truth about a situation. A child's disobedience can reflect on his parents. When parents look for excuses for their child's actions, 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.

Instead of wishfully hoping that your child will always do the right thing, remember that his nature is to sin. You can expect your child to act in conformance with his nature until he has been well trained.

## Two Facets of Child Training

The two facets of child training are *control* and *teaching*. The control aspect of training applies to the child stage of development (ages 1 to 13). The teaching aspect is during the youth stage (ages 13 to 20). A child must be told what to do, a youth must be taught why to do it.

Parents need to emphasize each facet of child training during the proper stage in order to truly reach the child. When parents exercise control over a child until he becomes obedient, they then can be successful in instructing him as a youth. This success is possible because their child will respect their position of authority and their right to teach him. *No one will accept instruction from one for whom he has no respect.*

Parents who attempt to reverse this procedure will experience great difficulties. A child who has been taught but not controlled will become less and less teachable. When he is a youth, he is likely to rebel at any attempt to control him.

Another way parents will fail in training their child is to extend the control aspect throughout the youth stage while omitting the needed teaching. When a youth is not taught by his parents, he is likely to forsake their standards as he grows older and begins to search for reasons on his own. When the parents don't teach him why he should follow the standards set down by them, the youth has no way to internalize these standards as his own.

## **Control**

*Control* means that the parent has his hands tightly upon the child. He rules over his child. To control a child means to use the *force* necessary to cause him to follow your directions. The second function of control is the power to restrain. To control a child means to use pressure to hold him back from what he would do if left to his own will and desires.

Controls are like boundaries – they fence out that which is dangerous from an area that is thereby protected. Such an area becomes safe, secure, and peaceful. Children desperately need these boundaries. They are insecure and unhappy without fine guidelines and directions that provide order to their lives.

*Pr 29:15 – The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings his mother to shame.*

*1 Sam 3:13 – For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. (NKJV)*

Controlling a child is an expression of *parental love*, true concern for the benefit of the child. This means that the parents must be willing to sacrifice their time to monitor closely the child's behavior. This means giving yourself to instantly handling unplanned interruptions into the course of your day. You must apply the necessary force to change their behavior.

Some may fear that the child will reject them and they will lose the child's love if they apply the proper force to control them. But it must be clear in the parent's mind that a child has a *limited capacity to love anyone outside of himself*. True love is the concern for and the expression of that concern in doing that which is best for the object of that love. When a child says, "I love you," it is not an expression of his desire to do that which is best for the person loved. Actually he is merely saying that this person has *pleased him*. A child loves *himself* and will express this love toward anything that pleases *him*. When he says, "I love cookies," he is saying he loves himself and that cookies please him. This is actually the false concept which is taught in the world today which says that *love results from the satisfying of personal desire*. This is a deception and *not true love* at all. If parents allow themselves to be deluded by this deception, they will produce self-centered young adults. Parents who provide strict control over their children's insatiable and self-centered natures are the parents who will eventually receive true appreciation and love from their children.

### **The Beginning**

It is important for parents to cause their child to respond at their word as young as possible. The child's response should be immediate upon the parent's command. Requiring a little child to respond *instantly* to the parent's command of "no" could prevent his injury or even his death. It should not be necessary for a child to burn his hand badly

or receive other injuries to learn the lessons of life. A child can learn at a very young age. For example, a wriggling six-month-old baby who intentionally refuses to let you put on his diaper can be taught the meaning of “no” in one or two simple lessons. When he tries to crawl away while changing his diaper, he can be told “no,” pulled back, and held in place for a moment. The next time that he tries to crawl away, he should be spanked lightly. (Even worldly common sense teaches that the hand is not the proper thing to use to spank with. Every man who has tried to train even dumb animals like dogs can testify to this). The shocked look and the tears in the baby’s eyes will indicate that you have gotten his attention and that the command “no” has taken on a new meaning. An angry cry and continued squirming may indicate a strong-willed child who will require more pressure in both intensity and frequency. After the child has submitted to diapering, he should be held and comforted. This process should be repeated as often as necessary until he responds to the command alone.

The controlled use of pain in child training is not cruel and will not cause the child to fear his parents. He will only learn to respect their word and their authority. They will have a proper fear of the rod. The children soon learn that the choice is theirs. If he chooses willfully to ignore the commands, he chooses to receive pain. The minor discomfort a child must experience in order to learn to obey his parents’ commands will save him much pain in the future.

Never deal with your child on the basis of his *wants* but on the basis of what he *needs*. Teach your child early in life that you will always respond to what he needs, but that much of what he wants will probably be denied him. Never give in to a child who is begging for something he wants. Play down his wants by asking instead what he needs and by teaching him how to make his needs known properly.

When a child consistently and instantly obeys, he has learned the most important standard. In other words, he has learned that his parents are in charge and that their word is law. The child can be taught this very early in life, but it will be challenged time

and time again. Every time parents attempt to direct their child against his will or restrict him from what he wants, they should be prepared to re-establish their right to rule.

Every child has a will of his own and strong desires, both of which are driven by his inherent nature of sin. To bring child under control and then maintain that control, parents need to be aware that there will be conflict. This conflict will normally exist throughout the *child stage*.

### **Conflict**

For parents to properly train their child, they must direct him according to their will. Often directions will not be the way the child himself wants to go. The result of this difference of wills is *conflict*. Parents must *expect* conflict (fight, battle, struggle, contend, emotional disturbance resulting from clash of wills and impulses). The will of the parent and the child are in opposition, antagonistic, incompatible. Parents would be naive to expect their children to receive their instructions with joy in their hearts and smiles on their faces. Child training just does not happen that way. Instead, parents should expect conflict and work toward the goal when the child is fully trained.

The child's natural inclination toward self-centeredness will be opposed to his parents' controls. The child can be expected to lust for sweets while rejecting foods that are good for him. He will strongly desire to be the center of attention. When the parents interfere with the child's selfish and perpetual pursuit of happiness, conflict will be the result. Conflict cannot be avoided. It is an integral part of the training process.

Child training is not just a matter of winning battles, it is actually altering the nature of the child. This alteration results from *consistently* directing the child onto paths different from the ones he would have chosen for himself. The times of conflict are the parents' opportunities to effect the necessary changes. The sooner and the more intense these conflicts are, the sooner a child can be brought under control.

The turning point with each child comes when he chooses to accept the rulership of his parents, totally yielding himself to their control. This is his year of decision. It is sometimes preceded by the most difficult year that the parents have experienced thus far with that child. So, do not lose heart and back off from the pressure when conflicts intensify for a period. The last battle in a war is often the most intense. The final challenge to your rulership is a test by the child to determine your worthiness to lead him. He needs to know for certain within himself that you love him enough to be able to trust you with his life.

As soon as the child knows his parents are in control, he becomes secure. Parents must lead with all diligence (Rom 12:8). Once the question of “who is in charge” has been settled in the child’s mind, he will no longer have to push against the walls of restraint which have been erected by his parents, testing them to determine their strength. It becomes obvious to him that his parents love him enough to protect and give him the best. The walls of restraint become walls of protection to him where he can rest securely. Even though he will still occasionally test his parents for confirmation, the conflict will be over for the most part.

## **Rebellion**

*Rebellion* is the act of open or determined defiance of, or resistance to, any authority or controlling power. Rebellion is the willful rejection of authority expressed either *actively* or *passively*.

Active rebellion is when your child will not listen to or accept your instructions, saying “no” or walking away. None of these overt actions of disrespect should be tolerated. He should quietly listen to your instructions without talking back or complaining. He should look at you when you speak and respond to you with “Yes, Abba.” When a child refuses to receive your judgment of a situation or refuses to accept your correction, this is also active rebellion. He may argue, stubbornly avoiding the acceptance of his

guilt, blaming it on someone else. Some children will “clam up” instead of outwardly arguing. Their unwillingness to admit their wrongdoing and to thereby agree with your reproof is a silent act of active rebellion.

*Passive rebellion* is practiced by children when they meet the external requirements for obedience, but internally are resentful. It has sometimes been described as sitting down on the outside while standing up on the inside. This attitude will eventually surface onto his facial expression of *disgust*, *anger* or *disrespect*. The child may politely listen to instructions but consistently fail to follow them. Girls are more prone to this type of rebellion.

The most subtle form of passive rebellion is to wait to obey until just before getting into trouble. The child considers that it is a victory of his own will when he does not obey until he himself decides to do so. Another subtle form of passive rebellion is to do *what* is required, but not in the *way* it should be done. Obedience is not the place for creativity. It is the place for strict and complete compliance (1 Sam 15:22-23).

Some children would not dare to openly disobey or even talk back but instead they seethe on the inside. Such children will act *melancholy* and have a sour disposition. They will *withdraw*, *sulk*, *pout* and in general make everyone around them miserable for not being given their own way. This type of rebellion *must* be brought into the open so that it can be overcome. If it is not, it is likely to explode in the teenage years. A parent must be aware of the potential danger in a quiet and sullen child.

When parents are exercising their authority and their right of rulership and a conflict results, it is the child who has chosen to revolt. He has chosen to challenge the parents' right to rule him and thus has become his own authority. He has rejected their external control and has come completely under the control of his own sinful nature.

## **Anarchy**

Child rebellion is the willful attempt by a child to overthrow parental authority. If rebellion is not put down, revolution will occur. *Revolution* is the complete overthrow of authority. When a child places himself on an equal position with the parents and is allowed to remain there, revolution has come to pass. If this happens YHWH's order is destroyed and chaos will result, cursing both of the parents. Having lost the authority in the house, the parent may try to appeal to the *underdeveloped reasoning abilities* of their child in an attempt to direct him. With reasoning, they try unsuccessfully to convince their child to do the right thing. After this ultimately fails, they try the bribery approach (sweets, giving liberties, etc.). All these approaches are sure signs that the parent has totally lost control.

Leadership requires a direct, open approach – one that clearly defines the rules to be followed and decisively eliminates all rebellion. Our God has provided parents with the right and the power to maintain their position of authority.

## **Chastisement**

It is sometimes necessary for authorities to utilize force in the proper exercise of their responsibilities. The forces available to parental authorities are *chastisement* for their children's rebellion and *punishment* for their disobedience. *Punishment* is the administration of justice by an authority for the breaking of an established standard. It should not be confused with *chastisement*. *Chastise* means "to inflict punishment or suffering upon, with a view to amendment." We often use the word *discipline* for this action, but discipline can refer to many facets of training other than chastisement. Discipline can have a wide range of meanings such as to *instruct*, *educate* or *train*. As a noun, *discipline* has a very wide range of meanings among which chastisement is one. Therefore, the word *discipline* is a more general term which could well describe the entire process of

child training, whereas the word chastisement is specifically limited to the infliction of pain for correction or restraint.

The meaning of the English word *chastise* comes the closest to the Hebrew and Greek words used in these verses: 2 Sam 7:14; Heb 12:6; Rev 3:19; Pr 13:24; Heb 12:7-8.

*Chastisement is the legitimate physical force parents are to use in correcting or restraining a child's rebellion.* There are some forms of disobedience which cannot a result of rebellion in children. Only when a society or culture becomes proud in its own wisdom does it become too sophisticated to utilize God's rules for the proper administration of authority. Such civilizations question the existence of any absolute standards and will ultimately be destroyed by a stronger civilization that does follow absolute standards (Daniel's vision of men with clay feet). From the example YHWH uses in 2 Sam 7:14 it is obvious that the standard of discipline has always been clear. And the *rod* is used for chastisement. There is no mention in the Bible of utilizing any other instrument or the hand to chastise a child.

Heb 12:6 shows that chastisement is true love. YHWH, our Father, cares enough for us to chastise us when we are rebellious. The word here for *chastise* means "to whip or lash with a whip or small flexible rod." The word for *receive* means "to accept or receive along side, or to welcome." When a child's rebellion has been conquered by a loving parent's use of chastisement, he can be welcomed back into fellowship.

Pr 13:24 – The word *s pares* means "to restrain, or to hold back." Parents who withhold the use of the rod are said to hate their children. The Hebrew word *son* means "a child of special relationship." It is used for the legitimate heir of the family. The word for *early* means "to break forth as a new day." Children must be chastised in the dawn of their lives (Pr 19:18; 22:15; 23:13; 28:15,17).

In Heb 12:8 it is clearly stated the status of a child who receives no chastisement. The father of an illegitimate child normally does not care for him. The child is not a legal

heir to the father's name or inheritance. Soon a child is rejected by his father as the unwanted product of his sin. It is no wonder that *children who are not chastised by their parents have a sense of rejection.*

No child is happy while he is in rebellion. Although he himself willfully caused the rebellion, he needs help to conquer it. When parents refuse to give a child the chastisement he needs to bring him back in control, he senses separation and alienation from the family. He is miserable within himself, and his parents are angry with him. The only way parents can demonstrate their love to the child at this point is to show him they care enough to set him free from this bondage which alienates him (Pr 13:24; 20:30).

When a child is in rebellion, physical pain is the *only* pressure that will cause him to choose to accept parental direction and controls. In his rebellious state, the child's will, dominated by his strong desires, has become the master of the house. The only way parents can re-establish their challenged authority is to use the force of chastisement.

### **Control is Essential to Child Training**

Controlling a child is definitely not all there is to child training. However, a child who does not honor the authority of his parents will not accept their teaching and cannot be properly trained. Some children are much easier to train than others. They seem to desire to please their parents. They look forward to instruction, and control is seldom an issue. But most children will not fall into this category. And even the children who are the easiest to control will occasionally rebel at some point in their childhood. Parents need to be alert to the fact that a quiet child can be in rebellion passively. It is easy to overlook rebellion in a child who gives no direct opposition to control. But the other extreme is a child who apparently cannot be controlled.

If a strong-willed child can seemingly withstand the rod without breaking, it may be a real problem for the parent. One of several things may be wrong: the rod may be

too small, the child is already too big to be brought under control with a rod, or he is in the process of placing his parents under his will.

If a child is very stubborn, he may not be beyond control, but has just figured you out. Boys can do this to their mothers as early as 6 or 7 years old. When the mother has shown signs of weakness (inconsistency, frustration, or emotional breakdown) during previous conflicts, the child calculates that he can eventually break her down. He makes a game out of resistance, hoping to play on the mother's weakness. The solution to this is for the mother to realize what is happening, make up her mind to conquer her weakness for the child's sake, and to stand firm in the conflict ahead. She must change her child's opinion of her and make him realize that she will not be intimidated. The father should also step in and make sure the child knows that he will not be allowed to win over his mother.

### **Teaching**

The final objective of child training is not to *control* a child, but to *teach* him what is right so that he will control himself.

Teaching provides the explanation for rules for which the child then becomes accountable. What the parent teaches the child ranges from manners to morality. The test will be in how the child behaves in conformity with his instructions. The well-trained child will learn to accept his parents' standards. The only reason that a generation gap would ever exist is because a child has been left to himself to develop a set of standards based upon his own will and by outside influences which the parents have not controlled (worldly influences). As he grows older he develops internal controls which replace the need for his parents' external controls.

### **Reason**

Reason is logical thinking. Most lessons will need to be taught through reason. Once a child is under control and he has come to an age where his vocabulary and con-

centration have developed enough to truly communicate, teaching through reasoning can begin. This is the youth stage. His mind has become an open, impressionable field from which a bountiful crop can be harvested if the right seed is carefully and diligently planted.

Now that that child has become obedient he will no longer be causing so much trouble to the parent. It may be easy for the parent to just give him his daily tasks and forget all about him, leaving him to remain a fallow ground. He knows all the right things to do, but does not really understand them. The words of our God must be planted like a strong standard in their hearts.

[We need to confirm the children even around the table , affirm the children especially.]

Putting these proper standards into a youth must come through communicating patiently with their newly-forming logical thinking process. Brainwashing would be programming a child by by-passing his will. But correct training should always be aimed at the conscious mind of the child and be an open challenge to his will. If not, the standards he is given in childhood will not stand when he is challenged in later life. The youth will not be able to defend these standards intelligently and thus he will easily be convinced to give them up.

What is taught to the youth must be accompanied by the reasons that confirm it to be true. Otherwise, the parents' standards appear to be merely their opinions or traditions. The parents may be diligent to teach the standards, but if they neglect to truly communicate with the youth from their heart about the reasons for these things, the standards all die in the second generation.

The next generation of parents consists of those same children who have no knowledge of why they think the way they do. In their insecurity, they become either dictatorial in their rulership or over-tolerant and permissive. Dictators attempt to force their standards on their children without any reason provided – “It is right because I say

so!” Or the permissive parent won’t know what to say, so he hides behind the excuse, “I want my children to choose for themselves.”

The word of our God and all that He has revealed to His people is the standard which we can pass on to our children without any hesitation. But we must have that word ever present on our lips so that we will have something fresh to put into our children at all times – when we rise up, when we walk along, when we go to bed at night. We must receive the apostolic teaching with our logical thinking process, using our will, in order to pass them on. We ourselves must understand *WHY* so that we can pass this reason on to our children. Paul knew this principle (2 Tim 2:2). This is the whole theory of de-programming, to remove unfounded standards from a person’s mind. Those who have been deprogrammed prove that what they received did not go into their willful, conscious, logical thinking process.

### **Punishment**

*Punishment* is not the same as *chastisement*; although many people confuse the two terms. The word *punishment* has a bad connotation, making one think of cruel treatment of some helpless subject. However, punishment as defined by our God is always just.

*Chastisement* is the specific use of a rod to inflict pain. It is used to conquer rebellion and force submission to authority.

*Punishment* is the infliction of a penalty in retribution for an offense. In Rom 13:4 it speaks of the minister of YHWH (meaning the authority who serves YHWH), who avenges (or brings justice). Parents stand in this place of authority over their children. The Greek word for *wrath* is the Biblical word for punishment. This is not a corrective measure for rebellion, but is the consequence of breaking a standard. If a child breaks a window because of his carelessness, his punishment (not chastisement) will be to clean up the mess and take measures necessary to get a glass and repair the window. Your

standard for him is to be a careful child. Many parents fail here for lack of concern for the child. They reason that it was not intentional, so they fix it themselves. The child never is trained in the way he should go. The penalty for being rude can be an *apology*. If the rudeness is intentional or repeated, the penalty will need to be increased to isolation of the rude child from others. As in all cases of punishment, the child must first admit that he was wrong before isolating him. In causing pain to another child, your child must learn that the penalty for causing pain is to receive pain. If a child has a problem with self-control with sweets, the penalty would be not receiving any sweets for a certain period of time.

A child is accountable for punishment only when the broken standard has been clearly set and communicated. Punishment is always administered after a child has *admitted* his guilt, and after the parent has forgiven the disobedience (Ps 99:8; 2 Chr 6:30). The consequences of our sin will still come even though we have been forgiven. As seen in the story of King David's sin with Uriah's wife, the punishment came even though David had been forgiven (2 Sam 12:10-13; 21:22). And, because of the greatness of his sin, the punishment continued for the rest of his life (2 Sam 12:14; 13:28; 18:14,15; 1 Kng 2:25).

The result of punishment is the establishment of a proper fear of justice and respect for the power of authority. It proves the sureness of judgment and prepares a child to accept the rule of government and YHWH. It helps a child understand and believe the absolute reality of YHWH's judgment.

The idea of punishment and chastisement are very closely related, yet punishment has been a more distant concept to us thus far. In view of YHWH's eternal punishment to the lawless ones, we must also come to understand the justice of due punishment.

## Standards

The first step in child training is setting the standards. A standard is defined as “a rule, principle; a means of judgment or estimation, a criterion, measure.” A child must always know exactly what the parents expect of him. This principle is true for anyone who is under authority.

Rom 4:15 – Where there is no outward law, there is not outward transgression. Thus, a child is only responsible for the standards he has been given. Parents must clearly state the directions or restrictions their children are expected to obey. Properly setting the standards is the foundation for fair rulership.

The correct standards will be re-enforced by the standards already instilled by YHWH within the child’s conscience which depends upon this knowledge put into it by his parents. As parents teach the child righteous and just standards, the child’s conscience will also confirm those standards. The child’s conscience itself is strengthened by the process of proper child training.

In making the standard, it must be certain that the child understands the instructions. The child’s immaturity must be considered. When very young, the child has a limited capacity to concentrate on anything other than on what he wants to do and difficulty comprehending complicated concepts. The parent should ask the child, “Now, what did I say?” It is not necessary that the child agree with instruction, only that he understands it. Instructions should be simple, especially for younger children. Instructions should be as direct as possible. Children easily become confused when provided more explanation than necessary. Parents must be sure not to give their instructions in a kidding manner or allow the child to think obedience is just a game. Parents who have a playful, familiar relationship with their little children actually promote their foolish behavior.

Teaching a standard can be done whether by example or by clear communication. To be sure that the child understands, he can be requested to demonstrate the example given or repeat the instructions in his own words. Some things parents teach their children will need to be repeated many times before a child fully understands.

Properly making a bed is an example of something that requires practice to learn. Demonstration and even parental assistance are required at first. Telling a child to go clean his room is not setting a standard. He really does not know what *clean* means. Only after the child has seen what is expected and has the physical ability to meet the standard should he be held accountable.

### **Provoking**

Eph 6:4; Col 3:21 – The Greek word translated *provoke* in Colossians means “to embitter, stir up, excite in a negative sense.” The father who irritates his children by verbal abuse is provoking the children to wrath. It is a sign of *weak and insecure leadership* for a parent to use cutting remarks intended to pressure a child. Saying things like, “Can’t you ever do anything right?” or, “I guess you will never learn!” or, “I just don’t know what to do with you,” or, “You’ll never amount to anything,” are only a result of a parent’s frustration and will do nothing but frustrate and discourage a child. (Lev 10 – Leaders must keep their peace.) If the authority is frustrated, the child is sure to be frustrated as well. A child has no protection against this kind of treatment, and is not sure what he should do since he is not given any clear directions to follow. The sad result of this is that the child will seethe internally or come to consider himself as *worthless*.

The word translated *provoke* in Ephesians is different from the word used in Colossians. It means “to make one beside himself in anger.” Parents who needle their children may drive them right out of the community. While some children respond to verbal abuse by becoming discouraged, others respond with uncontrolled anger. If a parent is

following the true standard of child training there is no excuse for ever becoming frustrated with their child or verbally abusing him.

Probably the worst thing a parent can do to a child is to provoke him to anger or discourage him by belittling or teasing him. This type of indirect approach will infuriate a child, but will not train him. Though a child, while being properly chastised, may become bitterly angry with his parents and even scream “I hate you,” this is completely different from the provoking spoken of here.

Notice that both of these verses are addressed to the father. Perhaps that is because the father is the chief authority responsible for the training of his children. He is responsible even though it is the mother who will execute most of the actual training.

### **Rebuke**

Parents should be prepared for and expect their children to disobey; it would be unnatural if they did not. Each failure should be viewed as a training opportunity, not a tragedy. Parents should look forward to each failure of their child to obey as an opportunity to teach their child a valuable lesson.

When the parent’s warning is ignored (the standard that was set has been broken), it is disobedience.

The things that a child does that are wrong (deeds, words, and attitudes) must be declared to be wrong by his parents. This is an important part of the training process, for this is when communication comes from the heart of a parent who is grieved over unrighteousness. The parent must clearly declare the unrighteousness and require a response from his child.

Parents must act as a judge of their child’s actions, words, and attitudes. Parents are in the position of authority that not only give them the right to make law, but also to judge wrong doing and to administer justice. The parent’s authority is represented by his word. He must rebuke the child. Rebuke means “to reprove, reprimand; to express

blame, or reprehension.” YHWH’s word reveals that rebuking has two purposes: *to expose the wrong* (bring it to light) and *to convict the guilty person* (Eph 5:13; Jn 3:20; 16:8).

Rebuking a child forces him to see that his action is unacceptable to his parents. He may not accept his guilt, but there can be no question that his authority considers him guilty. A child usually knows when he has done wrong, but the parent’s rebuke makes him face it.

Parents must rebuke their child to prevent his self-justification (the rationalization that he was right to do what is wrong) or his transfer of guilt (deceiving himself into thinking that it was really someone else’s fault that he did wrong). If it is not made clear to the child, then his rationalizing may lead to the searing of his tender conscience which (his conscience) will always agree with the parents’ righteous judgment if it is clearly spoken.

Rebuking a child should ordinarily be done in private. Embarrassment is not the objective; however, a child should never be allowed to get away with willful rebellion in public. If a child chooses to defy his parents’ authority in front of others, he should be rebuked before them as an example.

When a child has been rebuked, he again has a choice to make. He must either accept his parents’ right to judge him, or reject their authority and be in rebellion. Chastisement will then be needed to end his rebellion. Then forgiveness provided if he admits his guilt, and appropriate punishment rendered if necessary.

### **Guilt and Confession**

*Guilt* is “the fact of having committed some specified or implied offense.” It is not an emotional feeling. Most people today, when asked to define *guilt* would say that it is the way they feel about something they did. This is not true.

A person is guilty because of what he has done, not because of the way he feels. The reality of guilt needs to be understood apart from the emotional response. True guilt

exists because right and wrong are absolutes. When man breaks YHWH's basic standards of right and wrong he is convicted of guilt. Rom 2:15 – the guilty persons' feelings about the wrong done does not matter; he is guilty all the same.

When a child does something wrong, his conscience begins to convict him subconsciously of guilt. He is convicted of both the wrong itself and the need to right the wrong. A child under conviction will normally hang his head and avoid looking his parents in the eyes. If a child's guilt is not cleansed from his soul, he is likely to become moody and bitter, condemning others around him in order to justify himself. Emotional and even physical problems will result if the mental conflict of guilt is allowed to continue in a child.

The only solution to the problem of guilt is confession and restitution for the wrong done. The child must admit he was wrong and attempt to repair the wrong done to the injured person before his soul can be cleansed.

*Confession* is "making known or acknowledging one's fault, wrong, or weakness." The child must admit his responsibility for a wrong done. It is not the parents' objective to pry some emotional response from the guilty child. Guilt is the fact of being wrong. It needs to be acknowledged mentally, not emotionally. A child may feel very sorry he was caught. He may emotionally regret the punishment he will receive. He may even want to cry because of the embarrassment. But the important thing is that he admits he was wrong. When a child admits his guilt, he has acknowledged the wrong, owned up to his personal responsibility, and conceded to the rulership of his parents.

The truly sorry child should be willing to pay the penalty. On the other hand, a child who is punished without first admitting his guilt will have great resentment toward his parents. He will consider that he is being unjustly punished. Obviously, confession is an essential part of child training.

Confession not only resolves the child's guilt, but it also prevents any build-up of animosity between parent and child. The major reason parents are inclined to carry ani-

osity toward their disobedient children is because the issue of disobedience is not resolved. When a child disobeys, he separates, draws back, estranges himself from fellowship with his parents. The parents feel rejected because the standard they set was not important enough for the child to keep. Consequently, they may wish to hurt the child or make him feel guilty. The child's confession tends to eliminate the parents' alienation and makes forgiveness possible.