

NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

CHRISTIAN HOME: AN INSTITUTION
FOR RAISING GODLY
CHILDREN

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06 — 1024

ABSTRACT

Christian Parenting is God's order to Christian parents. The Creator and Owner of all things commissioned parents to train up their children in His (God's) own way (cf. Prov. 22:6). The end result of this training brings joy to God and the parents as well.

Consequently, in this study, the researcher attempted to find out the role of christian parents in raising their children in godly way. The outcome of this finding about Christian parenting which this essay mirrors are the following:

1. That Christian parents must not neglect their God-giving responsibility of training and teaching their children.
2. That Christian parents should lead their children to accepting Christ as their Lord and Saviour.
3. That Christian parents must have enough time for their children.
4. That the christian parents should diligently teach their children the Word of God through family devotions as well as other created avenue.
5. That Christian parents should create positive and conducive atmosphere for good rapport and cordial relationship at home, which children could not afford to miss.
6. Christian parents should show love to their children. This would serve as a premise through which parents can instill christian virtues and discipline into their children.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It is a privilege to be a parent. This privilege calls for responsibility. In Hebraic education, "the Shema" in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 is the primary religious tenet and mandate among the Hebrews. Such an important and lofty concept of God was to be passed on to the young Hebrew children so that they might know it from their early years. The same thing is expected from Christian parents today. "Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up".¹ This is God's expectations from all parents. Paul sounded the same note for Christians in Ephesians 6:4 "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Society is formed by different homes. No home, no society. If society is going to be peaceful and friendly for habitation, parents need to invest in discipling their children by inculcating and instilling godly training on them. Society is a product of home, if society will be godly and just, Christian home must be seen as a school where religious and moral values are taught.

Guiding children is parents' task. Every parent should see child-rearing and upbringing the way God sees it. Parents, as care-givers should show love and set the right example for their children. Parents can give a child warm food and chill his heart. Parents can lull him to sleep but tear his soul with bickering. They can clean his clothes and soil his memory with quarrelling. What difference does it make? It is most important that parents set examples

¹ Deu. 6:7

that lay the background for Christian faith. If a child has not been loved, has not been forgiven, has not been able to depend on the adults in his life, how can he believe in God who will love him, forgive him and stand by him? When children see their parents practicing Christianity in everyday tasks and experiences, then Christianity begins to have meaning for them. Parents who show that they hold Christ in high esteem by taking active part in the life of the church illustrate Christianity to their children in a way that needs no test.

In conclusion, godly parenting is down by the grace of God. Psychology and logic may fail. Parents are to be prayerful as they create conducive environment at home, influence their children's character positively and lead them to Christ.

Successful Christian parenting is not one-sided. It is a co-operative and joint effort of both parents. Parents should see themselves as partners in teaching, training and mentoring their children in godly way. It takes time to listen, observe and unhurried time to help the child develop trust and security. Children cannot be pushed aside nor ignored. The hurry and putting aside today may require many hours of time later in helping a fearful child feel secure and unafraid. Security to the young child is the feeling, "I am loved, I am all right just the way I am." Parents are the world of their children. They should exercise patience to help them build a wholesome self-image by generous encouragement and by not demanding perfect performance.

Parents build a child's security by the way they listen to them. Children need to spill their news and feelings in their own way at their preferred time. A child feels squelched when a parent pushes him aside. Parents should have unhurried time to listen to the feelings of their children. This is important if

raising godly children will not be a mirage at home. Children should be given free hand to interact at home. Parents are to allow them even to make mistakes. Correction should be done in love, parents are to speak words of praise and encouragement to them. This goes a long way to make them free at home, relate with and respond positively to his parents' guidance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The writer would like to give the following as recommendations:

What a child is listening to either affect him or expresses something from him. Either way, listening to music with nonlife theme is a bad sign. Good Christian cassettes should be played at home. The family should also cultivate the habit of singing Christian hymns and choruses. Music model at home should be Christlike (cf. Eph. 5:18-19; I Cor.10:31).

Also, the kind of pictures in the calendar or poster at home have some effects on the lives of children. Some pictures are pornographic in form. Others misrepresent life as God intends it to be. Parents should take note of this. Pictures at home should point children to Christ. Parents should be careful in their selection of pictures. The things a child sees make a more vivid impression than the thing he hears or feels.

Parents should see that the books put within the reach of their children are wholesome and helpful. Children will like to read what their parents read, out of inquisitiveness. The books that will make home most beautiful are those that have inspiration to draw their motive to the Gospel of Christ.

Above all, to raise godly children at home, spiritual life of such family should be okay. Family worship should be planned. Parents are to set

examples of how to spend time with God. If a child lives with parents who have strong and personal faith, he would learn to find God through his parents' shared faith. Family devotion is inevitable for Christian families. It is one of the ways to instill biblical principles and values in children. They should be allowed to contribute in either Bible reading, praying, singing or contributing their ideas during devotion.

Personal devotion is also recommended for the members of the family. Each member should spend some quality time of solitude to experience God. Children should be taught how to pray and read the Bible. Parents should teach the children that the Bible is an important book about God and they should be motivated to develop positive attitudes towards the Bible. Children should have Bible story books and books about the Bible. Likewise each child should have a Bible of his own and they should be taught to memorize some verses of the Bible. If children learn the Word of God by heart, it becomes part of their lives (cf. Psalm 119:11). Parents should tell children Bible stories to get them interested in the Bible.

In conclusion, successful parenting calls for prayer and the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Parents are to be sensitive and be filled with the Holy Spirit in their parenting endeavours. The writer would like to conclude with the prayer of Garry C. Myers, it reads thus:

"Oh, God, make me a better parent. Help me to understand my children to listen patiently to what they have to say and to understand all their questions kindly. Keep me from interrupting them, talking back to them and contradicting them. Make me as courteous to them as I would have them be to me. Give me the courage to confess my sins against my children and ask them forgiveness, when I know that I have done wrong.

"May I not vainly hurt the feelings of my children. Forbid that I should laugh at their mistakes, or resort to shame and ridicule as punishment.

