

TRAINING UP YOUR CHILD

A Bible Study on Proverbs 22:6

[1. THE PARENT - THE CHILD - WHAT DOES CHILD TRAINING MEAN](#)
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I. COMMENTS ON PROVERBS: 22:6

Proverbs 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 "*dedicate*" in every other passage where it occurs. To dedicate means "to renew, inaugurate, or initiate." Parents are commanded by God to initiate or start their child in a certain direction. He is not to be allowed to follow the path his soulish nature would take him, but he is to be set on a new path. Dedication is not just a one-time initiation, but incorporates the entire training process. The result of this training is for this new way to become the child's own way of life. When this training transpires, the child will not leave the path even as he grows older and becomes an adult.

The ancient root of this Hebrew word for train means "to make narrow" and even "to strangle." In other words, parents are to restrict the path their children may follow. The child described in this verse is in the "child" stage of development - under thirteen years old. Parents are not to wait for a child to choose his own way of life, but are to place him on the right path in early childhood. This directing does not mean dictating a child's career or personal preferences, but directing him in the way of life that agrees with God's standards.

Several interpretations of this passage have been suggested by Bible scholars in recent years. Some state that it is not an actual promise to parents, but merely a possibility that a child will turn out okay if parents do their best. I imagine this interpretation came about because we have observed the fact that good, moral, Christian parents have raised rotten kids on occasion. However, personal experience is not the basis for sound doctrine. Only Scripture may interpret itself, and we have many passages other than Proverb 22:6 that make it clear :

- good parenting produces good results

Proverbs 29:17, Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

Proverbs 31: 28 Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband *also*, and he praiseth her.

- while poor parenting produces poor results

Proverbs 17:21, He that begetteth a fool *doeth it* to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy.

Proverbs 29:15b, . . . but a child left *to himself* bringeth his mother to shame.

1 Samuel 3:13, For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

Attempts to alter this passage probably comes from a sincere desire to comfort those who have raised a wayward adult.

Another interpretation of this passage is : "Train up a child in the way the bow is bent (or, in keeping with his individual gifts)." This interpretation is then further interpreted to mean that parents need to adjust their training of each child based on his age, temperament (personality and emotional make-up), and hereditary history. I'm afraid there is no Scriptural substantiation for this interpretation, but common sense does indicate that we should understand our children and their unique differences. Without a doubt, children need to be taught commensurate with their mental and emotional maturity (chronological age is an inaccurate gauge). However, every child's soulish nature must be restricted; and every child has a need to be directed in The Way - God's standards and principles of life. Although each child will vary in how his soulish nature manifests itself; all children, at all ages, need to be trained by the same principles - no matter what their temperament might be.

The most accurate translation is: *"You dedicate a young child in accordance with his way (introduce, or initiate him into the righteous way of life), and indeed, when he becomes an adult, he will not turn aside from it."*

THIS VERSE IS DEFINITELY A PROMISE.

II. THE PARENT

A. GOD'S PROMISES TO PARENTS

God has provided information in the Bible that parents need in order to train their children. God's Word also promises that those parents who follow this truth will receive blessing, while those who do not, will receive cursing.

THE BLESSING

Proverbs 10:1a, The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father:

Proverbs 23:24, 25, The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise [child] shall have joy of him . . . Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.

Proverbs 29:17, Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

Proverbs 31:28, Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband [also], and he praiseth her.

THE CURSING

Proverbs 10:1b, . . . a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

Proverbs 17:21, He that begetteth a fool [doeth it] to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy.

Proverbs 29:15, The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left [to himself] bringeth his mother to shame.

These examples of cursing for parents reveal the sorrow and heartache they experience as their child rebels in his teens and early twenties. This cursing continues as the parents observe their child experiencing intense pressure as a result of his attempting to live a selfish and willful existence. They see his self-centered attitude affect his education, career, marriage, and family - eventually destroying what could have been a productive life. Thus the children themselves become the instruments of cursing to their own parents.

Training children is not a hit-or-miss proposition in which the parent has no control. It is not that some children just turn out okay while others may not. There is no such thing as a "bad seed." Although a child could conceivably reject all attempts to train him properly, he would have to choose against what he clearly knows to be right. Eventually, the one who rebels against good child training is likely to return to a productive life after a period of rebellion.

God has provided His truth to enable every parent to receive blessing rather than cursing. It is the responsibility of each mother and father to seek this truth and then to apply it in training their children. Even if you have failed miserably up to now, you can still affect your child's future by committing yourself to God's way. It ordinarily takes a full nineteen years to raise either a fool or a wise child. However, it is possible (with God's grace) to reverse twelve or thirteen years of fool raising and to start a child on the right path within the remaining six or seven years. To accomplish this feat will require an understanding of and a commitment to God's viewpoint on child training.

B. PARENTAL ACCOUNTABILITY

God has entrusted you with His creation of life. You would not have your child if it were not for the will of God.

Job 33:4, The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

The fact that God has entrusted you with His creation makes you accountable to Him for this gift of life. God, as a responsible Creator, has a purpose and plan for every-thing that He creates.

Psalms 127:3, Lo, children are an heritage from the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

"Children" and "fruit of the womb" refer to the physical results of human reproduction. The phrase 'heritage from the Lord' refers to the source of the child's soul life. Children are physically a product of the parents, but God is the source of every child's essence of life. The word translated "heritage" from the Hebrew means "an inheritance which is not given according to hereditary rights, but is a gift from the freewill of the donor" In other words, your child is a gift from God.

God has a plan and purpose for each child. Each child is a life from God that is placed in a specific family as a part of that plan. God has set children under their parents' control for approximately one-third of their lives. Unlike animals that raise their young for only a few months, children are dependent on their parents for an extensive training period. Animals need to receive training only for their physical existence, but a child requires training for

his soul. Therefore, parents are responsible to train their children according to God's standards.

CHILDREN ARE TO BE TRAINED BY THEIR PARENTS

Deuteronomy 6:6-7, And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

Ephesians 6:4, And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Proverbs 22:6, Train up a child in the way he should go and, when he is old, he will not depart from it.

If you, as a parent, really desire the best for your children, you will observe these commands to train your children. Training requires that you teach them and that your teaching is accepted.

But, before your child will receive your instructions, he must first honor your position.

CHILDREN ARE TO HONOR BOTH THEIR FATHER AND MOTHER

Exodus 20:12, Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Ephesians 6:2, Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise),

Parents should never allow disrespect to be shown toward his or her position. They have the right to rule because God gave that right to parents, not because it is one they have earned or deserved.

As a parent, you hold a key position of authority. And, God holds every parent accountable for how he or she trains up each child He has entrusted to them.

TEACHING HONOR

A child begins to notice something different about his Mom and Dad soon after birth - they are humongous! Even when he begins to stand up and teeter a few steps, Mom's and Dad's faces are still several child lengths above him. what a great beginning for parents who need to have their child's respect for effective training. The child already accepts his parents' position above him and is ready to be taught.

Parents can instill the concept of honor (respect for their position) by requiring the child to speak to them and others courteously. Please, thank you, yes and no ma'am (or sir), excuse me, and may I, should be taught and required as early as a child can say them. He should also be taught always to answer when spoken to and to look at you when you are speaking. As soon as possible he should be taught not to yell at you from another room, never to enter a room talking, not to interrupt an adult conversation (even on the phone) unless it is an emergency; to watch where he is going; not to rush through a door ahead of adults; to show respect for all elderly and smaller children, and kindness for animals. *Allowing a child to playfully hit, tease, run from you; or play argumentative games such as: " Yes, you will."*

(parent) "No, I won't." (child) Yes, you will" "No, I won't" teach disrespect and eventually will lead to an all out challenge of the parent's authority.

C. PARENTAL AUTHORITY

God has established the institution of the parent (Family Institution) as one of His ruling authorities on earth. To this position has been delegated both the right to rule children and all the power necessary to succeed in training children according to God's plan. This position is the direct agency through which children are to receive ruling during their childhood. That is, it is through this position that each child is to receive protection, direction, and instruction.

Because of God-granted parental authority, parents have the right to set their will above that of their children and to command them to follow their rulership. They also have the power to administer justice and to punish for disobedience, or to reward for conformance to their commands. To what extent may the parents enforce their will on their children?

CHILDREN MUST OBEY BOTH THEIR FATHER AND MOTHER

Colossians 3:20a, Children, OBEY your parents in ALL THINGS;

The word translated "obey" from the Greek language is a command and means "to hear and obey." In other words, this passage says children must do what they are told. This means that a parent's word is law for 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. Your children are to do what you tell them to do.

The boundary for parental authority is more extensive than that of any other institution. This is true because the parents' right to rule includes the power to force obedience to their will " in all things". No other institution is given this much power. Parents not only have the right to rule in all things, they also have the power to enforce their child's unwilling compliance to their commands.

Parental authority delegates to parents the right to rule the children under their control. No other institution or person has rulership rights over children. Neither society, school personnel, nosy individuals, nor even other institutions have any authority over children. The parents' power over their children is accountable to government only through God's laws concerning incest, injury; and murder. Parents are directly responsible to God for any other miss-use of their authority. *There is no such thing as "child rights" sanctioned by the Word of God. The child has only the God-given right to be raised by his parents without the intervention of any other institution.*

UNIFIED PARENTS

Matthew 12:25b, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.

Normally, a husband and his wife will share the role of parenting. It is imperative that they present a unified front to the children, even if they disagree. They can discuss their disagreements in private, but they must not ever undercut each other's decisions. The children need to know that each parent will back up the other.

D . PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Parenting is both a Father and a Mother responsibility.

THE ROLE OF FATHER AND MOTHER

Ephesians 6:2a, Honor thy father and mother . . .

Colossians 8:20, Children, obey your parents in all things;

Fathers are suppose to give leadership to the family by setting the standards, warning the children about penalties, and delegating some follow-through to the Mother. Men generally have defected from their role as leader in the home, and especially from fatherhood. This has badly damaged the last several generations of child development. The 50 year absence of fathers who were secure with their masculinity and their role of leader, provider, and protector of the family as well as cherisher of their wife, has dramatically distorted the development of both boys and girls. As a result, the men of the past three or four generations have been raised either effeminate, or totally insensitive toward women.

The mother also has a key role in the proper training of children. She assures that the father's standards are upheld in his absence; she maintains the peace and punishes for wrong doing in her presence; she sets her own law (Proverbs 1:8), but not contrary to her husband's will; and she enforces her own laws as needed. Unfortunately, if the father will not take the lead in the home and set or enforce the laws, the mother must set and administer right laws for the children (but not in front of the husband.) She must never push, badger; nag, or try to shame her husband into taking his responsibility.

I Peter 8:1, In the same manner, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the behavior of the wives,

She should continue to pray that God will cause her husband to see his role and take that responsibility for the sake of the children.

Now, this may be the first time you have realized that you are, and have the right to be, the ruler over your children. Since God has placed you in this position, you should function as one who has the right to rule. In other words, 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 who have failed to train their children properly often identify a patsy to blame for negatively influencing them. Teachers, other children, TV; and even the church often receive this blame. However, God holds only the parent accountable for training children. Therefore, it is the parents' responsibility to control what influences their children.

Children may be taught things at school that oppose the teaching of their parents, but it is the parents' responsibility to determine where the children go to school and what they are taught. Children can be influenced by their peers, but it is the parents' responsibility to control with whom their children associate. Children are definitely influenced by what they see on television and other media, but it is still the parent who is ultimately responsible for choosing to what his child is exposed. Children can ignore what is taught in church, but it is the parent whom God holds accountable for a child's instruction in the Word.

Parents are the symbol and representative of God's authority to their children. The way parents handle their rulership is the way children will begin to think about God, and all other authorities under God. Parents are in a very crucial position in the child's life. Let us look at how a child thinks: - If he sees his parents are fair, then he will consider that God must also be fair. - If his parents punish for wrong doing, then God will punish for wrong doing. - If his parents care for him, then God must care for him. - If his parents respect and obey God's Word, then he must respect and obey God. - If his parents mean what they say then God must mean what He says.

As a parent, you have the opportunity to mold the child's opinions about God, government, and his or her marriage relationship. A child who is required to obey his parents will come to respect their authority and will thus be prepared to submit to other authorities, including God's Word.

E. NO! NO!

FAMILIARIZATION

Parents are authority figures and therefore cannot also be pals or buddies with a child who must become obedient to their role. Parents must be careful not to sabotage their own authority. When parents become too familiar with their children (treating them as equals in decision making with adults, allowing them to use parents' first names in address, or allowing them to have preeminence in all adult conversations), they will lose proper respect for all adults. "Familiarity breeds contempt" is a true saying when applied to immature children. *Untrained children are not meant to have an equal voice in family decisions even about their own lives. Parents really are supposed to know more than their children about proper diet and dress, church attendance, manners, acceptable friends and entertainment, and a hundred other issues.*

We don't need to go so far as the military's "no fraternizing with the troops" position. It is certainly beneficial that both parents spend time talking to, playing with, and cuddling their sons and daughters. Children need closeness from each parent, but parents need to recognize when the lines between play and over familiarization have been crossed. When your child begins to give you orders, demands your exclusive attention, or talks back, it's time to back off and restore your position as a parent.

Parents who make their children the focal point of the home, rather than a participant with responsibilities, do them a great injustice. The children are raised to think of themselves as more important than anyone else. They are taught to believe that their opinions, accomplishments, and dreams should monopolize adult's time, even if they have to interrupt. They are taught to brag about themselves and their accomplishments; no matter how trivial. These self-centered children are certainly not being trained to: "Let each esteem others better than themselves." (Philippians 2:3). Such children will grow up with the "me first" mentality of the past several generations.

Maintaining your position of authority does not mean that you never include children in discussions about certain decisions, especially when they will be involved in those decisions. For instance, when the grandparents are coming for a visit and decisions must be made on the sleeping arrangements and about who will perform which chores, it is a good time to teach planning and cooperation. For matters such as this you may establish a voting system that will help your children learn about the chain of command. Call a family meeting and encouraged each child to offer suggestions and then all vote. Granted, the voting is not

equal: the children each have one vote, Mother has one more vote than the combined vote of the children , and Dad has one more vote than the combined vote of the children and Mother (*keeping family order in tact*); but each child is allowed to participate, make suggestions, and offer help. The children will enjoyed this arrangement and, even when they are out-voted, they never feel their thoughts aren't considered.

BUCK PASSING

I don't know how many Christian parents I've heard trying to intimidate a little child with some threat that God is watching and may punish him directly for misbehaving. In doing this, parents are trying to escape the responsibility of parenting. They don't want to train their child or to punish for disobedience. They might as well use Santa Claus threats, like the heathen do to control their children's behavior. Using God as a threat is even worse. Never make God appear as a wrathful ogre!

USING A CHILD'S FEARS TO CONTROL

Some parents cruelly use a child's insecurities or fears against him: "You stay in bed tonight or the monster under your bed will get you." "If you don't come right now, I'll leave you in the store by yourself." "If you don't behave, I'll have the police come and arrest you." "If you don't straighten up, we'll have to send you to an institution for delinquents." Imagine these threats being given to a totally immature child who needs the firm hand of his parents to help him grow to maturity. Children treated in this manner are expected to parent themselves and thus pull themselves into maturity by their own bootstraps. This is absurd!

Should children fear their parents? They definitely should have a healthy fear of their parents' authority. They will also fear the instrument of chastisement, if it's used correctly. Healthy fear is one that protects one from harm - road dangers, high places, dangerous reptiles and insects, bad areas of town; and when you do wrong, authorities (God, parents, police, principals, coaches, and bosses). *When children are raised without a proper fear of authority; they become like street ruffians with no respect for anyone or anything except raw force.*

F. BEING A PARENT - SUMMARY

We have seen that the Bible clearly defines the positions of the parent and the child. It also defines the consequences resulting from meeting or failing to meet God's standards. Let us review some of the major principles about parents:

Blessings of great joy and satisfaction exist for both the father and mother who properly train their children, while the cursing of great sorrow is the consequence to those who do not.

The soul life of each child is the creation of God, and God has a plan and a purpose for anything He creates.

God intends for children to be trained by their parents according to His standards.

Child training is dependent on the child's respect for his parent's position of authority.

The principle of authority was designed by God for the orderly administration of His plan for mankind and is totally under His control.

Parental authority is the most extensive of all institutions and includes the right to demand obedience from children.

The parents' word is law to their children.

Parents are responsible to raise obedient and respectful children.

Parents are accountable to God alone for their rulership.

Children who honor their parents are blessed with physical prosperity, whereas those who rebel in overt disrespect receive the cursing of a living death and/or a violent end.

Parents must provide strong leadership for their children and stand responsible for their outside influences.

Parents are the symbol and representative of God's authority to their children.

At this point, you may not know how you are going to obtain obedience or respect from your children, or exactly what you are to teach them. But, you should understand both your responsibility of rulership over the children and your accountability to God for how that responsibility is handled. You also may begin to see how much your child needs your rulership to protect him. Fulfilling parental responsibilities is an expression of love - *if you love your children, rule them.*

III. THE CHILD

We have seen what the Bible says about parents' responsibility to train their children in conformance with God's standards, their position of rulership, and their accountability to God for His gift of life - the CHILD. Now, exactly who is this child we are to train? What in his makeup requires such extensive training? Why is the power of parental authority necessary?

In answer we understand that as a result of ORIGINAL SIN that:

1. Each child is a sinner, having a sin nature from conception.

Psalm 51:5, Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Psalm 58:3, The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

2. A child (even an infant or from his mothers womb), who has been spiritually re-newed (born-again) after the image of God who created him, although he no longer has a sin nature, still has within his soul the propensity to sin; that is to say, he has a tendency or inclination to sin or his soul is bent toward sin.

Luke 1:15, 41, For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb . . . And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb;

Mark 9:42, And whosoever shall offend one of *these* little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

Titus 3:5, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Ephesians 4:24, And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

2 Corinthians 5:17, Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Romans 6:6, Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Romans 7:14, 17, For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

3. Because of the sin nature of the child who has not been born-again and the tendency in the soul of the born-again child toward sin, children must be restrained by their parents.

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

1 Samuel 3:13, For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

A child can only be expected to act according to his soul nature.

IV. WHAT DOES CHILD TRAINING MEAN

Before you can be effective in training your children, it is necessary to know exactly what training means. 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.

Training is not just the process of teaching only. If positive results are not obtained, training has not occurred.

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. Parents can have no comfort in saying, "I just don't understand why he turned out that way. I always told him what was right." Telling is not training.

Mere exposure to a good home environment is also not training. Being raised in a moral atmosphere is no guarantee that a child will "catch" the standards of his parents. Enough moral parents, including a significant number of ministers, have raised immoral or amoral children to prove this point. Parents who expect a child to follow their standards by the example they set, but do not train into him, will often be shocked when he acquires only their faults and rejects most of what is good in their lives.

Christian parents can deceive themselves into thinking that simply exposing their child to church or Christian school will eliminate the need for their personal training. Although a Bible-teaching church and a good Christian school can assist the parents, they are not replacements for parents training their own children. It is necessary that parents train their children in obedience and respect for authority before the church or school can be truly effective.

Raising a child is not training. Plants and animals are raised. To raise something means to grow it. To raise a child would only consist of feeding, clothing, and protecting him from

destruction until he reaches physical maturity. While it is true today that most parents are only "raising" their children, raising does not constitute the training of the soul that God intends.

If you desire for your child to become obedient and willing to accept God's standards as his own, you will have to utilize the process that God has designed to obtain these results. Biblical child training produces a quality character much different than would have naturally developed had the child been left alone to grow up according to his own nature. God's Word commands parents specifically to so *alter* the soulish nature of their children.

A. PARENTS ARE TO TRAIN THEIR CHILDREN

Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go and, when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Restraining a child's soulish nature is not all there is to child training. However; until the soulish 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 they are to work themselves out of this job as early as possible.

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 and good manners as well as any academic instruction that matches his mental maturity. Parents of obedient children are in a position to teach whatever right, or even wrong, information they possess. Parents as teachers have an awesome responsibility for what they teach

James 3:1, "My brethren, be not many masters (teachers), knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation."

A DANGER EXISTS: any teaching that cannot be substantiated by the facts is subject to rejection by a child as he seeks truth and reason during his youth. There is, therefore, a danger that not only unverifiable teaching, but also verifiable teaching may be rejected. This is one of the main reasons that youth tend to reject opinionated, religious teachings that are not based firmly on Biblical substantiation.

It is vital that the parent knows and teaches only what is right and true. Of course, the Bible is the ultimate source for the truth of all soul and spiritual information. So, parents who intend to teach their child the right way of life will teach him the standards that God has given to man.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

Parents are commanded to teach their children all that God has revealed to man. The Hebrew word translated "teach" here means "to inculcate" (internalize by repetition - to train God's standards into the child intensively by the use of repetition). Teaching is to be on a consistent basis and at every opportunity. Training is a constant process until the results desired are achieved. Positive teaching will have to be repeated time and time again

since it runs counter to the soulish inclination of the child. These verses also show that parents need to know God's Word in order to teach their children properly. If you are going to teach your children the right way of life, you first must know what it is.

The word translated "children" in verse seven is not a word that refers to a specific age, but instead emphasizes the family relationship. In other words, parents are responsible for teaching their own children. Our churches and Christian schools would do well to teach parents the importance of teaching their own children God's Word.

God uses another word for teaching in passages similar to the one just studied (Deuteronomy 1:10 and 11:19).

Deuteronomy 1:10, *Specially* the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and *that* they may teach their children.

Deuteronomy 11:19, And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

The Hebrew word used in these passages 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 this word suggests relates to child training. Parents may need to prod their child with a sharp rebuke occasionally to get the child's attention and to cause him to go the direction he must go.

B. NEGATIVE TRAINING

As a parent, you *are* always training your child, even if you are not teaching him according to God's standards. Simply because you are in the position of rulership, your child will receive his direction from you - right or wrong. You set the standards for his acceptable conduct either by what you allow (training by default) or by what you unintentionally teach (overt negative training).

1. Negative Training by Default

When parents simply do nothing, the child is trained to think that whatever he wants to do is all right. This inaction is negative training by default.

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 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. A parent who has poor table manners is unlikely to allow himself to see and correct the atrocious mealtime behavior of his child. A parent who gossips and runs down others is unlikely to recognize and correct this trait. 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.

Default training can also occur when parents do not enforce even those standards by which they live. This failure may be due to the parents' occupation with their own problems or duties, weariness of the child's need for constant correction, or just plain laziness. How often do you allow your child to get away with an action or attitude for which you would normally correct him? Training requires consistency, and it is comforting to realize that consistency pays. The more consistent you are, the sooner your child will become trained and the less frequently you will need to correct him.

Default training is often the result of leaving correction to someone else. A father does this when he leaves all the training to the mother; even when the need for correction is directly before him. A mother does this when she refuses to correct the child while the father is home in an attempt to force him into action. It is a great benefit to the child when both parents reinforce each other. In any event, neither parent should neglect a child's need to be trained consistently. If only one parent is willing to train the child, then he or she must do it.

2. Overt Negative Training

Even more disastrous than negative training by default is *overt* negative training. This type of training occurs when parents actually train negative behavior patterns into their child. These negative characteristics then hinder the parents' ability to accomplish positive training. They will also affect the child's ability to receive instruction outside the home - at school, church, and work.

Overt negative training results from the way parents allow their child to react to their instructions, such as:

A child can be trained that obedience is required only after instructions have been repeated a second or third time.

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.

A child can be trained to ignore instructions even if repeated or accompanied by threats. This training occurs when there has been seldom, if any, enforcement by the parent issuing the instructions.

A child can be trained to question or argue about every explanation. Parents do not owe their child an explanation for their instructions. He does not have to know why you want him to do it, let alone agree with you. You are his authority and thereby have the right to direct his activities. When a child is allowed to make parents justify their instructions, it under-mines their 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 child can train his parents to wait until he decides when to obey by saying:

- "Just a minute", or

- "Okay, Mommy" and then waiting 30 minutes or so to do it.

A child can be trained to give an excuse for his disobedience or wrongdoing. This training takes place when parents ask their child why he disobeyed or did something

wrong, in attempting to understand the reason. However; the reason why 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.

C. THE TWO FACETS OF CHILD TRAINING

There are two facets of child training, CONTROLLING AND TEACHING. These basically parallel the specific stages of a child's development. The control aspect of training corresponds to the "*child*" stage - to age thirteen, while the teaching aspect corresponds to the "*youth*" stage - the teen years. (Adulthood is twenty years of age and up - Exodus 30:14; Numbers 1:3, 30, 14:29.)

- a child must be told what to do;
- a youth needs to be taught why to do it.

While children are in the child stage, they should be expected to follow the commands of their parents to the letter. This period of development is characterized by the child's immaturity and need for constant restraint. It is the time for maximum, external control by the parents; a time of law, when the child is trained about what to do, or not to do. Sufficiently intense parental pressure will require the child to comply with and to learn to obey these laws.

By the time a child reaches thirteen years of age, he should be obedient to, and respectful of his parents' right to rule. He should exhibit manners that demonstrate an attitude of respect. His self-discipline should be highly developed; that is, he should possess a great deal of internal control over his own desires. Confrontations and conflicts should be all but over for the parents who have properly controlled their children throughout the child stage.

During the time children are in the *youth stage*, they still should be expected to obey their parents. However; obedience should now begin to result from willing submission rather than from forced compliance. This period of development is the time when children are to be taught the reasons behind the laws for which they have been held accountable. These reasons constitute why he should or should not do something.

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. Finally, he can become impossible to control. Attempting to reason with a young child while being permissive toward his disobedience guarantees losing control.

The emphasis of the two facets of child training definitely match the "*child*" and "*youth*" stages of human development. However; there is a certain overlap of both controlling and teaching. A youth who is not obedient must still be controlled, while an obedient child can be taught many standards even when he is quite young. The principle to follow is: A child is to be controlled as a child as long as he chooses to act like a child, and a child should be taught to the extent he demonstrates obedience and respect.

A child can be taught anytime he respects your right to teach him; a child must be kept under control in any area he has not demonstrated that he is responsible.

D. CONTROLLING YOUR CHILDREN

Control is the force, or pressure, by which you exercise your right of parental rulership - the right to set the standards for, to direct the actions of, and to administer justice to your children. As a parent, you have the legitimate right to exert pressure on your children.

Control is divided into three functions.

The first is the power to direct. 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.

The third function of control is the pressure that results from the rules (standards) given to the child and by which he is tested and judged.

Children are born without controls. (Remember their need for diapers?) Children must have external controls (diapers) until their internal controls can be developed (toilet training). Similarly, they have the need for external restrictions and the development of internal controls in every other area of their lives. Children need to have controls over what and when they eat, when to sleep, what clothing to wear, how to act, and what is allowed to influence them. When parents fail to control and then train their children in any area of life, they are doing something similar to not using diapers and never toilet training. You can visualize what lack of controls would mean in this illustration.

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

1 Samuel 3:13, For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

Can it ever be too late to gain control over a youth? **Yes. If a child chooses to leave home after he reaches a legal age, or cannot be kept at home when younger; the parents have lost their chance. They can only wait for the natural discipline of the world to work on such a rebel and pray for God's heavy; but loving, hand to bring him under control. *However, as long as a youth lives with his parents and will accept the force needed to bring him under control, there is still hope.***

When Do Controls Begin?

From the very first day of a baby's life, either the baby is going to be allowed to determine his own arbitrary schedule; or his parents will decide when he should eat, sleep, and play in a logical, orderly fashion. Since parents have the responsibility to first control and then to train their children; obviously, a parents directed philosophy of baby care is correct. Of course, this is the exact opposite of the child-centered philosophy that has started so many children in recent generations on their self-centered journey through life.

A wriggling six-month-old baby who intentionally refuses to be diapered can be taught the meaning of "no" in one or two simple lessons. when he tries to crawl away during a changing, he can be told ("no," pulled back, and held in place *for* a moment. The next time he tries to crawl away, he should be told "no" once firmly and lightly tapped once or twice

on the upper leg with a small switch. The shocked look and tears will indicate you got his attention and that the command "no" has taken on a real 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 been diapered, he should be held and comforted. This process should be repeated as often as necessary until he responds to the command alone. Of course, you could turn this into a fun playtime for you - chasing the baby pulling him back, and laughing with his sweet giggle - but then he wouldn't learn his first lesson in self-discipline. Also, he won't understand the times you won't play because you don't have time or because he's a real mess.

A child needs to learn that his disobedience results in receiving his parents' disapproval. The parents' controlled use of pain is not cruel and will not cause the child to fear his parents personally. He will only learn to respect their word and the authority they possess. The child soon learns that the choice is his. 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' command will save him much pain in the future.

Parents should not hesitate to establish a healthy respect for their authority as soon as the child is capable of doing what is expected of him. The commands "stop" and "come" can be added to a child's vocabulary of obedience words even before he can speak. These words become an external control by which parents can protect the child from danger. The child who learns to respect his parents' word while young can be directed away from unseen dangers throughout his later childhood.

When a young child learns to obey the commands of "no," "stop," and "come," he can easily be taught the boundaries of his exploration. He can be taught not to touch such potential dangers as electrical cords, wall sockets, hot items, or fence gates. It is not necessary that he understands why these things are dangerous at this point, only that it is painful to disobey his parents. Imagine trying to explain to a two-year-old why he should not stick a hair pin in an electrical socket. Parents could never explain all of life's dangers to their children; therefore, children must learn to accept warnings without question.

Learning obedience is not only for a child's protection, it is also the basis for controlling him while he is being taught to conform to his parents' standards. A child needs to learn at the very beginning that it is not his will or wants that will dictate policy in the home, but the will of his parents.

Parents are infinitely more qualified to know what is best for even the most intelligent child. Experience has taught them much about life. They will always be ahead of their child in experience. This experience and their position of parental authority provide the qualifications for them to set policy. Parents who consider themselves under-educated or not intelligent should never allow this thinking to prevent them from controlling their child. Parents know better than a child what he truly needs.

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 probably will be denied. Never give in to a child who is begging for something he wants. Play down his wants by asking him instead what he needs and by

teaching him how to make his legitimate needs properly known. This teaching will help him develop the self-control that can lead to self-discipline.

When a child consistently and instantly obeys his parents on command, 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. This fact of life can be taught to children 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.

Again, establishing parental control should begin when a child is quite young. But, what do you do with a child who

is already several years old, perhaps even in adolescence? The principle is still the same. Children must be brought under control before teaching can begin. A child must respect the word of his parents before he can be taught; and before he will respect their word, he must first obey their word. Therefore, the first stage for even the older child is to be required to obey his parents' commands - instantly and without back talk.

E. REBELLION

Parents must face the fact that conflict will exist in child training partly because there is more than one will involved, and secondly, the child's strong desire and constant temptation to try to satisfy what he wants. This conflict is the result of a child's rebellion. Rebellion, formally defined, is "(the act of) open or determined defiance of, or resistance to, any authority or controlling power." Parents must learn to recognize the ways children express their rebellion and how to handle rebellion when it occurs.

Rebellion is the willful rejection of authority expressed either *ACTIVELY* or *PASSIVELY*.

1. ACTIVE (OVERT) REBELLION

A child is in rebellion when he will not listen to, accept or says "no" to your instructions, throws a fit, walks away while you are still talking, hits you, acts in direct disobedience or will not accept your correction. None of these *overt* demonstrations of disrespect should ever be tolerated.

2. PASSIVE REBELLION

Passive rebellion is practiced by children when they meet the external requirements for obedience, but internally are resentful. This type of rebellion begins in the child's hidden mental attitude, but eventually will surface in his facial expressions of disrespect, disgust, or anger.

Passive rebellion can be expressed by a child who politely listens to your instructions, but who consistently fails to follow them without reminders, threats, or pressure. A child considers that it is a victory of his own will over the will of his parents 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 have been done.. They only partially follow the instructions and then improvise by adding something or doing it however they want. Obedience is not the place for creativity. It is the place for strict compliance (1 Samuel 15:22, 23).

And Samuel said, Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king.

Some children would not dare to disobey openly or even talk back to their parents. Instead they seethe on the inside. This type of internal rebellion will often reveal itself in facial expressions. Such children will act melancholy and have the disposition of a lemon. They will withdraw, sulk, pout, and in general make everyone around them miserable for not having their own way. This type of rebellion must be drawn out into the open so that it can be overcome. If it is not, it is likely to explode in the teenage years. Parents must be aware of the potential danger in a quiet but sullen child!

Basically the principle is that a child is in rebellion any time he knowingly and willingly places his will above the stated will of his parents. When a child deliberately refuses to accept his parents' right to rule, he is choosing to be rebellious.

F. CHASTISEMENT

The force defined in God's Word that is to be used by parents to control children when they rebel is "chastisement." Chastisement will make the difference between success and failure in training children.

Chastise means "to inflict punishment or suffering upon, with a view to amendment; also simply, to punish, to inflict punishment (esp. corporal punishment) on."

The meaning of the English word "chastise" comes the closest to God's meaning for both the Hebrew and the Greek words used in the Biblical passages quoted in this unit.

Chastisement (or corporal punishment) is the legitimate physical force parents are to use in correcting or restraining a child's rebellion.

NOTE: We are only discussing chastisement in relationship to a child who is in rebellion as defined previously. Chastisement should not be used for all disobedience. (The way to handle disobedience that is not a result of rebellion will be discussed in the next unit ("Teaching Your Children."))

God considers chastisement so natural to parents that He uses it for an illustration of the way He would deal with a rebellious child. Obviously, God would not use this example if it were not His standard.

2 Samuel 7:14, 1 will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, 1 will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men;"

Chastisement is actually an expression of parental love as shown by such verses as:

Hebrews 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

Revelation 3:19a, As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten . . .

Proverbs 13:24, He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him early.

Hebrews 12:7b, . . . for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

When a child is in rebellion, physical pain (chastisement) is the only pressure that will cause him to choose to accept parental direction and controls. A rebellious child has already rejected his parents' authority. He has already chosen to rule himself in accordance with what he wants. In other words, his will, dominated by his strong desires, has become his master. The only way parents can re-establish their challenged authority is to use the force of chastisement. It is also the only way to save the child from himself.

1. Correct use of Chastisement

God designed chastisement as the proper force to be used by parents to control the rebellion of their children. As is true with any human authority, force can be misused. As an authority under God's authority, parents are accountable for the way they handle this delegated power. Parents must be careful not to misuse chastisement.

First, let us look again at the definition of chastisement. To chastise means "to inflict punishment or suffering upon, with a view to amendment; also simply, to punish, to inflict punishment (esp. corporal punishment) on."

When this definition is related to child training it means to use a rod to inflict pain sufficient to cause a child to correct his rebellion - or in other words, to restrain a child from willful disobedience.

2. The Rod for Chastisement - Why must we use a rod to chastise our children? The only reason that should be necessary is because God's Word says to use a rod. God has specifically established the rod as the symbol of human authority.

The Hebrew word translated "rod" in the Old Testament passages concerning the chastisement of children is a symbol of God's delegated authority to the human race. This rod refers to the right of human rulership of either government or parents. When the authority of a legitimate ruler is challenged, a rod is to be used to inflict pain sufficient to end the rebellion. Figuratively, the rod refers to military conquest by one nation against another that is being rebellious to God or His plan. Historically, the rod has been used in this manner on many such nations (Psalms 89:32; Isaiah 10:5, 24; Lamentations 3:1; Ezekiel 20:87; Micah 5:1).

Literally, the rod is a narrow flexible stick used on a rebellious child by his parents.

2 Samuel 7:14, I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:

Proverbs 13:24, He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

Proverbs 19:18, Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

Proverbs 22:15, Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; *but* the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

Proverbs 23:13-14, Withhold not correction from the child: for *if* thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.

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

When parents utilize the instrument specifically designed by God as the symbol of His delegated authority, it triggers a response within the soul of the child. This natural response makes the minor pain experienced in chastisement take on special meaning. No amount of spanking with the hand or hitting with any other instrument will have the same affect.

The rod can be used equally well by the mother as by the father. Its use does not require physical strength. Unlike a paddle, whose pain varies with the strength of the user; a rod produces similar degrees of pain no matter who uses it.

The pain received from a rod is more humbling than harmful. There is no defense against it. The more a child braces himself, the more he tightens up and increases the sting. The most sensitive layer of skin is close to the surface where the nerve endings are located. The only way to stop the sting of a rod is to submit. That is exactly what a child will do submit to his parents' will and thus end his rebellion.

God knows exactly what He is doing. His way is perfect whether He is designing the universe, the plan of salvation, or the rod as the instrument of authority to break the willful resistance of a child's rebellion. *Parents would do well to teach their children about God's design of the rod as the symbol of their right to rule. The child should learn that his parents are as willing to obey God's Word as they expect him to be in obeying their word.*

The rod that is to be used for chastisement has specific characteristics. It can cause stripes (thin marks like those left by a whip) and yet is small enough not to do permanent damage even if used strenuously. Some children may scream as if they are dying, but striking a child with a narrow rod will not kill him. The rod is to be a thin wooden stick like a switch. Of course, the size of the rod should vary with the size of the child. A willow or peach tree branch may be fine for a rebellious two-year old, but a small hickory rod or dowel rod would be more fitting for a well-muscled teenage boy

The rod should be used on the bare back, preferably on the buttocks, especially on younger children.

Proverbs 10:13, In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found: but a rod *is* for the back of him that is void of understanding.

Proverbs 19:29, Judgments are prepared for scorers, and stripes for the back of fools.

Proverbs 26:3, A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the fool's back.

3. The objective of chastisement is NOT to cause pain, stripes, tears/sorrow, to vent parent's anger/frustration, or to be used as punishment; BUT to bring a rebellious child's will under control. It does not "break" a child's spirit or even his will to force him to obey. It only causes him to choose obedience over rebellion. Remember, God's Word commands

that children are to obey their parents. It is the child who chooses to break God's law. The parents are merely enforcing God's law when they must chastise a rebellious child. The objective in chastisement is forcing the child's obedience to the will of his parents. Chastisement is the controlled use of force.

4. There is no substitute for chastisement. Parents may wish for an "easier," more "humane" way, but chastisement is really the easiest way. Chastisement is not only "humane," it is Divine. Chastisement is God's method for parents to establish and maintain control of their children. How "humane" is it for a child not to learn a proper attitude toward authority and, therefore, become a criminal, a drug addict, or a homosexual?

5. How young should chastisement begin? Parents will usually only need to use a single swat with a small, flexible rod with a toddler from the time he starts crawling to about 15 months old (age is no real criteria - how large and how stubborn the child is will be the real issue.) Mothers will often slap a toddler's hand for his getting into something he shouldn't. There is no problem with a single, warning slap for trying to touch the hot stove; or even for small infractions. This can take the place of formal chastisement as long as baby responds and mother doesn't hit too hard.

6. How old can a child be and still be chastised? Several Christian psychologists have given their personal opinions in this area. One predominate opinion (apart from the authority of Scripture) advises parents not to use corporal punishment after 10 or 12 years old. There are no Bible verses to support this position. I agree that a properly trained child from infancy would have little need for chastisement in his teens.:

First of all, Scripture considers the entire non-adult stage up until 20 years-old subject to chastisement (the very Greek word for chastisement, *paideia* is derived from *pais* - the Greek word for the entire childhood period from infant to adult).

Secondly, the passage in Deuteronomy 21:18-21 about a drunkard son obviously has an older boy in view who had been chastised by his parents unsuccessfully before they turned him over as an incorrigible child to the elders for the death penalty. Also, the passages about a child striking or even cursing his parents (Exodus 21:15, 17; Matthew 15:4), thereby deserving the death penalty; was most likely referring to a youth in his late teens.

Thirdly, the opinion that chastisement shouldn't be used past 10 or 12 years old is unrealistic. Many parents today don't learn about Biblical child training until their children are already half-grown. Since they have never gained control of their children's wills and soulful natures, ages 10 through perhaps 14 will be a period of intense struggle and require chastisement to establish the parents' authority.

7. How many swats are necessary? Only as many as are needed to re-establish your authority. To be effective make sure you have a rod of sufficient size; that a child isn't wearing jeans or other heavily padded clothing (or a phone book); and that you have the character to win the battle. It is recommended stopping in between sets of three swats and give the child a chance to surrender. Tell him you're going to the other room, but that you'll be back in a few minutes. Explain that while you're gone he must decide if he needs

another spanking, or if he is ready to admit his wrongdoing. This procedure can be repeated as necessary and should help break the resolve of even the most stubborn child.

8. Size of the rod - Don't use any heavier rod than is necessary. The rod should be flexible, but sturdy enough not to break. Use common sense. Suggested sizes according to age:

1-2 Tot Rod - 3/16" x 24" dowel

2-4 Mob Control - 1/4" x 24" dowel

4-8 Train or Consequences - 5/16" x 27" dowel

8-12 The Equalizer - 3/8" x 27" dowel

12 & up Rebel Router - 1/2" x 33" dowel

9. The clothing issue. Most parents would admit that it is a waste of effort to chastise through either a diaper or heavy pants, like jeans. But, we also don't want to embarrass our children any more than necessary. A rule of thumb might be that you can spank them bare-bottomed as long as you are still washing them in the tub or are otherwise seeing them nude anyway.

After then the child should be spanked wearing under-wear at the least. when a child moves into puberty, a swim suit or similar clothing would be more suitable, if chastisement is still necessary. Obviously, it would be better to train your children as early as possible to avoid these difficulties.

10. What position is best? Over your lap for a one-year-old, laying on the bed for a two to four-year-old, or bent over holding the ankles for older children.. Be careful not to strike above the belt line on any child, or too low on boys.

11. What if chastisement doesn't work? Some parents would like to think that their child doesn't respond to spankings - he's laughed during one, puts his hand back to prevent one, won't acknowledge wrongdoing, or won't accept parents' authority. There are several reasons this happens:

Inconsistency. The parent is arbitrary with the penalty. Sometimes the child gets away with the same infraction for which other times he is chastised.

Parental Weakness. The parent shows weakness to the child (tears, emotional trauma, etc.). He knows if he can hold out (making you pay the maximum pain), that he can break your will to continue.

Insufficient Pain. The pain should be sufficient to cause the child to want it to stop, to remember it, and to not want it repeated.

New procedure. Chastisement may not be effective with a ten-year-old who hasn't been spanked since he was in diapers. If chastisement is a new procedure it must be announced before hand with warnings given.

12. Other instruments. Belts can whip around a child and be dangerous, boards can physically injure a child, and some parents might lose control while slapping a child with their hand.

13. Privacy. Chastisement should always be done in private, for the child's dignity and the parent's safety.

14. What about breaking the child's spirit? Proper chastisement will not break a child's spirit (desire to live, excitement for life). It won't even break his will. But, it will give him a reason for his will to choose obedience over self-centeredness. It also should break the hold pride has over your child, as he is humbled and forced to choose to submit. Parents need to understand that before they use the power of chastisement, they must make sure they have the child dead-to-rights - especially if they intend to chastise until the child admits he is wrong. It is better to err on the side of the child than to chastise wrongly.

15. What about temper tantrums? When a child is already on the floor; banging his head on the cabinet, is not the time to chastise. He has gone so far as to lose all mental control and is hysterical. Chastisement can be administered before a temper tantrum begins, if you can see one coming. This helps the child develop self-control while he is still rational. A child who has already lost control can be brought to consciousness by splashing a couple of ounces of water in his face. This has the same effect of slapping a hysterical person to shock them back to reality. The second or third such treatment should cure future tantrums by causing a child to learn to control himself. If shock therapy is too traumatic for you, simply ignore his tantrum and walk away. At least this will teach him that he cannot control you.

G. SUMMARY: CONTROLLING YOUR CHILDREN

We should now have a clear understanding of what control means and why it is necessary with children. We have learned to expect conflict when we exercise the responsibility to direct or restrain our children and can now identify this conflict as rebellion which comes from the child's will. We have also studied God's natural solution to rebellion - chastisement. The following is a review of some of the major principles presented in this section:

Control is the facet of child training by which parents obtain obedience and respect from their children.

As long as a child accepts his parents' right to direct and restrain him, he is under their control.

In controlling a child, parents can expect conflict to occur.

When a child deliberately refuses to accept parental authority, he is in rebellion.

Chastisement is God's method to end the rebellion and return the child under the parents' authority and control.

Chastisement is the controlled administration of physical pain to cause the child to cease his rebelling and again accept his parents' authority.

Parents are to chastise by using a rod, a narrow stick which can cause stripes.

Parents are not to chastise in anger, for the purpose of hurting or causing stripes, to cause tears or sorrow, or to vent their own frustrations.

Chastisement is the expression of true love and a demonstration of family membership.

Chastisement is not verbal abuse, talking it over, punishment, or ignoring the conflict.

The result of chastisement is the restoration of the proper relationship between child and parent. Only if this proper relationship exists can a parent fulfill God's objective to train the child.

The ultimate purpose of control is to prepare the child for instruction from God's Word and for his development of self-discipline.

V. TEACHING YOUR CHILD

A. INTRODUCTION

You cannot leave a child in a playpen forever. Eventually he must learn why he cannot play ball with the crystal heirloom or pull the cat's tail. 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. Parents should not act as their child's external control any longer than necessary. As soon as a child becomes consistently obedient, he should be taught according to his ability to comprehend fully that teaching.

To comprehend instructions requires both vocabulary and concentration as well as a willingness to learn. Therefore, most teaching will not occur before a child both approaches the "youth" stage and honors his parents' authority.

Teaching as a part of child training is not simply a matter of giving instructions to be either accepted or rejected. Teaching provides the explanation for rules for which the child then becomes accountable. As with any teaching that is designed to reach its objective, the child must be required to demonstrate that he has learned the desired lesson; in other words, he must pass the test. Teaching means "the action of impressing upon the mind forcible admonition or frequent repetition; the emphatic or persistent teaching of something." Since the teaching necessary in child training is *primarily* concerning proper conduct, the child's test is the way he behaves in conformity with his instructions.

B. FOUR STEPS

God's Word reveals a perfect system by which a child can be trained successfully. This system consists of **FOUR BASIC STEPS** for parents to follow.

The first is "**to set the standards.**" This step constitutes the giving of directions and serves as a warning of what is to be expected if the directions are not followed.

The second is "**to rebuke.**" This step is taken when a child breaks the established standard.

The third is "**to forgive.**" This step follows the child's acceptance of his wrong doing by admitting his guilt.

The fourth and final step is "**to punish.**" Punishment is the execution of justice to be administered by God's delegated authorities for broken standards. Punishment and chastisement are not equivalent, as will be fully explained.

Parents who follow this system correctly and consistently will be successful in training their children. Each child will learn and accept the standards that he or she is taught. The system is simple in structure and can be used with any child who submits to authority.

A child who is not obedient must be brought under control before this system can be used, since only an obedient child can be taught. The rebellious child has only one lesson to learn and that is who is in charge.

Again, the principle to follow is: a child is to be controlled as long as he chooses to act like a child, and a child should be taught to the extent that he demonstrates obedience and respect.

1. STANDARDS

Step one in the child training system is setting the standards. A standard is defined as "a rule, principle, or means of judgment or estimation; a criterion, measure." A child must always know exactly what his parents expect of him. This principle is true for anyone who is under authority.

The Biblical principle behind setting standards is clear: there can be no personal accountability without the existence of law:

Romans 4:15, Because the law worketh wrath; for where no law is' there is no transgression.

Romans 5:18, For until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

In child training, parents must clearly state the directions or restrictions their children are expected to obey. Properly setting the standards is the foundation for fair rulership. A child has the right to know what his parents want him to do and not to do. The basis for any purposeful child training should be the standards given to man by God.

Children Must Comprehend Instructions. It is not enough to simply give a child instructions. Parents need to make certain their instructions are both heard and understood. One way for parents to make sure they can expect their instructions to be followed is to insist that the child repeat each instruction. Parents can ask the child: "Now, what did I say?" "what does that mean?" or, "what will happen if you don't obey?" It is not necessary for a child to agree with an instruction - just that he understands.

Standards Should Include Warning. Setting standards should normally include a warning of the penalty for disobedience. God's Word, as always, provides us with this principle. When God sets a standard for man's obedience, He includes a warning of the punishment that can be expected. For example, God gave man the standard not to commit murder (intentional or negligent homicide):

Exodus 20:13, Thou shalt not kill.

As a part of the standard. God also warned of the penalty for committing murder.

Exodus 21:12, He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death.

Other passages in Leviticus and Deuteronomy define the different degrees of homicide and provide additional information on how a government should administer the death penalty included in the discussions are the reasons for the penalty's necessity.

The warning of punishment for breaking a standard is only fair. Punishment should never be arbitrarily administered by an authority. Justice includes the warning of the penalty, as well as the giving of the standard, to those who are subject to obey. In His total fairness, God has warned man of the penalty for ignoring the most important standard ever given to man:

John 3:36a, He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;

John 3:36b, "and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

In this single verse, God not only clearly tells man the standard of salvation, but also warns of the punishment he will receive for disobedience of this all-important standard.

Five General Categories of Standards: Setting standards could be divided into five general categories. Listed in order of importance, they are: (1) obedience (doing what is told), (2) honor (respecting authority), (3) trustworthiness (requiring truthfulness and honesty in deed), (4) self-control (developing behavior toward others and self-discipline), and (5) following instructions (accepting parental advice based on personal respect).

THE STANDARD - SUMMARY

A standard is a rule or law to be kept.

Standards must be established and clearly communicated before anyone subject to those standards can be held accountable to follow them.

Children must be taught exactly what is expected of them.

Since the parents' authority is delegated by God, the standards they set should generally be in agreement with God's standards.

Parents must make sure their instructions are both heard and understood. Requiring a child to acknowledge the instructions and even to repeat them back will ensure reception and understanding.

It is not necessary for a child to agree with the standard set, just to understand it.

Instructions should be kept simple, especially for younger children.

Children should be required to receive all instructions with a proper attitude of respect and willingness to comply.

Parents must not kid with children when giving instructions. Giving instructions during play could be confusing to a child's respect for parental authority.

Setting standards should also include a warning of the penalty for disobedience.

The penalty should always match the standard and be one that the child can comprehend.

Many standards must be taught by demonstration over a period of time.

Only after a child both understands and has the physical ability to comply with a standard should he become fully accountable for his performance.

Obedience is the primary standard for a child to learn. The teaching of all other standards is dependent on a child's obedience.

Honor of parents, or respect for their right to rule, is the second most important standard to be learned. Honor is the natural result of firm but fair rulership.

Training a child to be trustworthy in word and deed is the molding of a quality character. Learning to accept personal responsibility for one's own thoughts, words, and deeds is the mark of maturity.

The next most important area of standards to teach a child is self-control. This area includes acceptable personal behavior and self-discipline.

Training in acceptable behavior includes teaching manners that emphasize consideration for others and re-enforcing the natural masculine/feminine distinctions.

Self-discipline is the restricting or forcing of oneself to do those things that are not one's choice by nature.

The fifth category of standards parents are to teach their children consists of all instructions unique to each family. General instructions include the parents' decisions on bedtime, dress, cleanliness, food, duties, education, entertainment, associates, church, and attitude of the child.

General instructions also include warnings and advice to the child about his life after childhood. These instructions will only be accepted by children who respect the persons of their parents.

Parents do not have to earn or personally deserve the honor due to their position, but personal respect must be earned. To receive their child's personal respect, parents must develop a worthy character.

Parents should not over influence their teenagers, but allow them to develop their own preferences within the bounds of God's Word.

Parents should never compare one child against another unfavorably. They also must be consistent with the enforcement of all established standards.

Above all, parents must not verbally provoke their child to anger or belittle him into frustration and discouragement.

Parents who set and consistently enforce quality standards will receive blessings beyond description through their trained children. Successful parenting has rewards like few other human endeavors.

2. 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 as a tragedy. Consider the standards that you set as being instructions in a course on soul training. The test for this course is obedience. When a child disobeys, he has failed the test and must receive the appropriate penalty as further instructions. Parents should look forward to each failure as an opportunity to teach their child a valuable lesson in personal responsibility. Children must be held accountable for their actions:

Proverbs 20:11, Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.

WHAT REBUKE MEANS

The parents' authority is represented by their word. Their word is law as far as the child is concerned. When a child knowingly or unknowingly commits a wrong, his parents must declare the issue as being wrong. Rebuke means "to reprove, reprimand; to express blame or reprehension of (a quality, action, etc.)." God's Word reveals that *rebuking has two purposes: to expose the wrong (bring it to light) and to convict the guilty person.*

John 3:20, For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

John 16:8, And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

Ephesians 5:13, But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

Rebuking a child forces him to see that his action is unacceptable to his parents. He may not accept his guilt, but his parents' rebuke makes it clear that his authority considers him guilty. A child usually knows when he has done wrong, but the parents' rebuke makes him face the fact. When parents do not rebuke the wrong their children commit, they are actually condoning wrong doing. Authorities who tolerate unrighteous behavior promote unrighteousness and abdicate their responsibility. When authorities do not judge the wrongs committed, each person becomes his own judge.

Judges 21:25, In those days [there was] no king in Israel: every man did [that which was] right in his own eyes.

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).

The principle to follow: ***never ask your children for an excuse - you will always get one***. The reason a child breaks a standard - peer pressure, circumstances, or even severe soul disturbances - is not a legitimate excuse for wrong doing. *Determining guilt is the true issue, not finding a reason to excuse guilt.*

Reproving 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. Example: "Son, you are not to tell me no. Go to your room and I'll be there in a minute."

Finally, a rebuke sets the stage for punishment. It is the open declaration by the authority that judges an act to be wrong and worthy of punishment. A child should never be punished without telling him what he did wrong and reminding him of the standard that was set. It is also essential for him to admit his guilt. A child needs to accept that he is to blame and truly deserves his punishment. A proper rebuke also re-enforces the conscience for the child's future guidance.

When a child has been rebuked, he again has a choice to make. He must either accept his parents' right to judge him, or he will reject their authority and be in rebellion. If he is in rebellion, chastisement is the only way to re-establish his parents' rejected position of authority. However, if a child accepts his guilt, the next step is for his parents to forgive him.

3. FORGIVENESS

After a child disobeys one of his parents' standards (or least after being rebuked), he feels alienated from them and desperately needs their forgiveness and acceptance. He may experience the "bad dog" syndrome; that is, he may act like a dog that tucks his tail between his legs after

being scolded. A child who truly desires to please his parents (and all children want to be accepted and approved) is somewhat disoriented after his confession. He does not know if his parents are mad at him or what he should do next. Parents must forgive the child immediately and completely after his confession and reassure him of their full acceptance.

Forgiveness continues to remove the effects of guilt in a child's soul. The child should also be taught to accept the reality of forgiveness. God's Word reveals the standard for forgiveness:

1 John 1:9, If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Psalm 32:5, I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.

These verses reveal that forgiveness is available only *after* the confession of sin. The Bible also reveals that forgiveness is to be complete; the wrong is to be completely forgotten:

Isaiah 43:25, I, *even I, am* he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. (See also Acts 3:19).

Jeremiah 31:34b, . . . for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Parents must be willing to accept their child's legitimate confession. Disobedience that has been confessed is not to be brought up in the future and used against the child. It is to be forgotten, erased from the parent's mind so that the child starts with a new slate. Confession should be satisfactory to resolve any animosity the parents may have had because of the child's disobedience. **Forgive and forget is the rule.**

4. PUNISHMENT

Punishment is not the same as chastisement; yet these two terms have become almost synonymous in the English language.

As we have already seen, chastisement is the specific use of a rod to inflict pain. It is used to conquer rebellion and force submission to authority. Physical pain should be used as a punishment only for acts that demonstrate rebellion against authority; or for the intentional hurting of another person or a helpless animal.

Normally punishment is the just *penalty for any type of wrong done*. Its purpose is not to force submission or control rebellion. Punishment is the payment that must be made for a specific wrong committed. For example: If a child carelessly breaks a lamp, he is punished by paying the penalty for the wrong done; he cleans up the mess and buys a new lamp.

Punishment is "*the action of punishing or the fact of being punished; the infliction of a penalty in retribution for an offense; a penalty imposed to ensure the application and enforcement of a law.*" There is a correct amount, time, and way to administer punishment; it is a highly objective process. There is no reason why parents cannot be confident in establishing penalties and administering justice when necessary. Parents, as God's established authority over children, have the responsibility to execute justice when standards are broken.

God's Authorities are to Execute Justice

Romans 18:4, For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

This verse provides some encouraging information for parents. It indicates that authorities will eventually catch the habitual offender. If a child is practicing wrong doing, he will eventually get caught. This is one of the reasons human justice can be administered firmly. The one who is caught has probably gotten away without being noticed on other occasions. Since parents are not all-knowing or ever-present, they will not catch their child for his every offense. But, when they do catch him in the act, they can punish him to the fullest degree with confidence of being fair. The Bible bears out the fact that no one ever really gets away with anything:

Numbers 32:23b, . . . and be sure your sin will find you out (see also Isaiah 59:12)

God's Word provides the principles that establish how penalties are to be set. A penalty is the fixed amount of punishment corresponding to the wrong done. Therefore, a penalty is fair restitution, or the correct payment, to right a wrong. Restitution restores a righteous condition that has been destroyed through an unrighteous act.

In establishing standards of righteousness for man, God provides the principle for setting proper penalties:

Leviticus 24:17-22, And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death. And he that killeth a beast shall make it good; beast for beast. And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbour; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him; Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him *again*. And he that killeth a beast, he shall restore it: and he that killeth a man, he shall be put to death. Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger, as for one of your own country: for I *am* the LORD your God.

It is clear that God intends for a wrong to be paid for by an equal penalty. This principle also applies to any accidental wrong occurring between individuals (Exodus 22:5, 6, 12 & 14).

Now that we have seen the principles behind punishment, let us apply these principles to child training. Parents can establish penalties by employing the following guidelines:

Penalties for Children

1. Respect for property. Children can be taught that if they intentionally or carelessly damage property, they will have to pay for it. If they mark, tear, scratch, break, or otherwise damage property, they should pay for restoration to the extent that they are accountable. This property should include even their own toys and clothes not bought with their own money. Children should learn respect for property as young as possible. Of course, if parents leave a two-year-old alone in grandmother's room of best china, they should expect the worst and be willing to pay the penalty themselves.

When children break something, they should usually be required to clean up the mess, even if it was an accident, or even if they are too young to be accountable for the full penalty. Their participation teaches them responsibility and caution. Every broken standard has a

penalty; the question is, who pays the cost. Even when a child is too young to be held accountable, a broken vase must still be paid for and cleaned up by someone.

2. Manners and behavior toward others. Children must learn to respect the rights of others. The penalty for being rude or crude can be an apology. However, if the offense is intentional or repeated, the penalty will need to be increased to isolation of the offending child from others. As in all other administrations of punishment, the parent must first make the child admit he was wrong before isolating him. If a child is a troublemaker, he needs to be separated from those he is bothering; he kept others from enjoying themselves, now only he is kept from enjoying himself. Here again the penalty can be increased for a repeated or intentional problem.

3. Physical harm to others. Children must learn the danger in causing pain to others. The penalty for causing others pain is to receive pain (chastisement). This penalty can even be imposed if a child engages in activities that are potentially dangerous - especially to children younger than he. An example is an older child who knows better trying to goad a naive younger child into catching a bumblebee with his bare hands. Older children should learn to protect those who are younger and to act responsibly around them.

4. Self-control. Children must learn to control themselves. The penalty for a child's lack of self-control would be denial of something wanted. If a child consistently exhibits laziness, he can be punished with additional duties; or if the problem is always trying to eat the wrong foods, he can be denied all candy or other junk food for a set period of time. Often, a child's specific weakness in the area of self control will require stricter measures. If a child has a problem with dishonesty; every act of lying, cheating, or stealing may need to be treated as rebellion for which he is chastised. However, ample warning should be clearly given before treating any disobedience with the penalty for rebellion.

These principles should help you understand the setting of penalties for disobedience. It is simply a process of common sense. Parents should determine the penalty at the time they set standards, fully expecting to carry out the punishment. In this way, the penalty will not be influenced by emotions at the time of disobedience. Knowing how to set penalties is not enough; parents must also know when to punish.

The Administration of Punishment

Punishment should normally be administered after a child has admitted his guilt (the fact that he was wrong), and after the parents have forgiven his disobedience. The principle of punishment after forgiveness is revealed in God's Word:

Psalms 99:8, Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God: Thou wast a God who forgavest them, though thou hast taken vengeance on their misdeeds.

2 Chronicles 6:30a, Then hear thou from heaven, thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways,

When punishment occurs after confession and forgiveness, it can be administered by parents without anger. The conflict is over, and the penalty is just an objective fact of life.

The child who has submitted to his parents' authority and truly accepted his guilt will also welcome punishment with a proper attitude. This does not mean that the child will laugh about having to clean up a mess, paying for something damaged, or apologizing. It does, however, mean that he should not resent or fight against the penalty.

If a child rebels against his parents about taking his punishment, it is likely that he did not truly accept responsibility for his guilt. His confession was probably not genuine. Parents will need to rebuke such a child for his attitude and may even need to use the rod, if he refuses to accept their authority.

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 God. It helps a child understand and believe the absolute reality of God's judgment. When a well-trained child hears the Word of God say, "*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*" (John 3:36), that child is much more likely to take it seriously than the child who has not learned about judgment.

VI. CHILD TRAINING SUMMARY

Child training is the process used by parents that will cause a child to reach the objective for which he has been trained. Biblically, the process includes both restraining the child and also teaching him the right way of life (Proverbs 22:6). The desired objective is for the child to learn God's Word, the knowledge of which can then direct him throughout his adult life. To reach this objective parents are commanded by God's Word to train their children by God's standards (Deuteronomy 4:10; 6:6-7; 11:19). The properly trained child will develop a character of better quality than he would have developed had he been left to grow up according to his own soulish nature.

The soulish nature with which each child is born seeks to enslave him by means of a constant temptation to fulfill his will and strong desires (Psalm 51:5; 58:3). Under control of this nature a child is totally self-centered. He desperately needs his parents' help in controlling his soulish nature (Proverbs 29:15; 1 Samuel 3:13).

Controlling a child's natural tendencies requires exertion of parental power, force, or pressure sufficient to cause a child to follow his parents' directions (Proverbs 29:15; 1 Samuel 3:13). Parents must require their children to obey in order to control them effectively.

Obedience is reality when a child consistently does what he is told, even when it is counter to his will or desire (Colossians 3:20). Obedience will help parents to protect their children from harm, both physically and psychologically. It is also the basis for a child's respect for his parents' authority (Ephesians 6:2).

Parental authority is the God-delegated right to set the parents' will above that of the child and to command him to follow their rulership. It is the power that parents have to administer justice, to punish for disobedience and to reward for conformity to their commands. Parental authority includes the force necessary to resolve the inevitable conflict that occurs when a child rebels against being controlled. Some of

the verses that support parental authority are: Exodus 21:15,17; Deuteronomy 21:18-21; 27:16; Proverbs 30:17; Matthew 15:4; Colossians 3:20; Ephesians 6:1.

Rebellion is the act of open or determined defiance of; or resistance to, any authority or controlling power. A child rebels any time he knowingly and willingly places his will above the stated will of his parents. A child's rebellion can only be controlled by the force of chastisement.

Chastisement, when related to child training, refers to the use of a rod to inflict pain sufficient to correct a child's rebellion or to restrain a child from willful disobedience (2 Samuel 7:14; Proverbs 3:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15; Hebrews 12:6-7).

The rod is God's designated instrument for parents to use in chastising their rebellious children. God has specifically established the rod as the symbol of human authority (2 Samuel 7:14; Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15). Parents will cause a child to become obedient and to respect their word by the proper use of the rod. A child must respect his parents' word before he can be taught.

Teaching a child is the ultimate objective of child training. A child is to be taught to control himself. When this occurs, he no longer has a need for his parents' external control. He is also to be taught standards of acceptable behavior and the reasons behind those standards (Proverbs 22:6).

Standards should be inculcated (internalized by repetition) into children as soon as they are able to comprehend instructions. Since the parents' authority is delegated by God, the standards they set should not be contrary to God's standards (Deuteronomy 4:10; 6:6-7; 11:19). When a child breaks a standard, the wrong must be exposed by his parent's rebuke.

Rebuking a child is when parents declare that a specific action is wrong and unacceptable. A rebuke exposes guilt and convicts the guilty person (John 3:20; 16:8; Ephesians 5:13).

Guilt is the fact of having committed a wrong, not an emotional feeling. There are only three ways to handle guilt: justify the wrong done, transfer the guilt to someone or something else, or confess (admit to or agree with) the proper authority. Confession is necessary to eliminate the devastating effects of guilt. Children who knowingly have disobeyed feel alienated from their parents and desperately need to be restored to their fellowship and acceptance.

Confession is the honest acknowledgment of guilt (Leviticus 26:40a; Psalm 32:5). When a child confesses his guilt and is forgiven by his parents, it begins to cleanse his soul and prepares him to accept his punishment. A child's confession also prevents any build-up of animosity on the parents' part and enables them to forgive the child's disobedience.

Forgiveness of a child should be immediate and unconditional after the child's confession (Isaiah 43:25; Jeremiah 31:34b; 1 John 1:9). He should be reassured by his parents of their love and restored acceptance. Forgiveness continues to remove the effects of guilt in the child's soul. He is now ready for the final step in the training process - punishment.

Punishment is the infliction of a penalty in retribution for an offense. The correct penalty is the amount or kind of payment required to make equal restitution for the wrong done (Leviticus 24:17-22; Romans 13:4). when a child pays the penalty for a broken standard, he has completed the cleansing of his soul from guilt.