

RAISING GODLY CHILDREN

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Children are the fruits and blessings of marriage, and as a result the assets, responsibilities and liabilities of the family.

Ps 127:3-5

3 Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him. 4 Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. 5 Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate.

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Ps 128:3-6

3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table. 4 Thus is the man blessed who fears the LORD. 5 May the LORD bless you from Zion all the days of your life; may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem, 6 and may you live to see your children's children. Peace be upon Israel.

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It is true that many were born and are still being born outside of wedlock, but God designed children to be born within marriage so that they will be given proper training and up-bringing by both parents. The subject of proper training of a child is so important to God that he encourages his children not to divorce each other so that their children will be godly and holy.

1 Cor 7:10-14

10 To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. 11 But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife. 12 To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. 13 And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. 14 For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.

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Children are assets to the couple, so they are to be invested into for them to fully develop and become what God who made them purposed them to be in life. So they are the responsibilities of the parents. It is not the responsibility of the mothers alone, but of both parents. Both parents have their respective rolls to play to make the child develop into a full grown man. This is one of the reasons why God is against divorce. Divorce denies the child the investment of time, love, wisdom, experience, money and valuable lessons into the life of the child by both parents.

When a child is not properly brought up in the fear of God according to the word of God, that child will eventually become a burden to the parents. May your child not become a burden to you in Jesus name. It is an experience you would not want to have in your life time. Training your children is your obligation and liability. Wishing that your child is a good child will not make your child to be good. It takes diligent investment of time, care, teaching, correction, exemplary actions and discipline to make your child to be good. Failure to do this will make you cry in future.

MARRIAGE AND RAISING A CHILD

Marriage was designed to create a family setting where children will be trained to know and love God, understand life and the basic principles of successful living, become faithful witnesses for Jesus Christ, understand purpose, and assist to fulfill purpose and to see to the building and administering of their nation and the world in general. As a result, parents are commanded to train up their children in the fear of the Lord.

Prov 22:6

6 Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

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- The family is the first school of relationship every human has.
- What happens in the family manifests in the larger society.
- The values formed in the family is what each person takes into the larger society and lives by.
- Any child spoilt by his family will definitely live a spoilt life, but, any child well trained will live like a well trained person.
- They say, 'Charity begins at home'.

WHAT YOU MUST KNOW ABOUT CHILDREN

1. Their ignorant nature.

All children are born ignorant. They know nothing at birth. What you teach them is what they believe. It is your responsibility to teach them the truth about life and the society. Transfer unto them God's teachings about life, people, the spiritual world around us, relationships, submission and authority, love and all that is to be known.

2. Their restless nature.

Children appear restless because they want to explore the world around them. Everything seems to catch their attention and that makes them restless. They seem to want to catch up with the adults as soon as possible. Another reason why they appear restless is that they don't have any cares or worries. An understanding of this will help you to relate and be patient with them.

3. Their dependence nature.

Children are dependent on their parents because they can do nothing on their own. It is therefore the duty of both parents to attend to the needs of the child until such a time that the child grows up to start doing things for him or herself. It is your duty to provide and care for them as they are totally dependent on you.

4. Their stubborn nature.

Children are usually stubborn. The scripture says so and instructs that the rod of discipline will drive it out.

Prov 22:15

15 Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.

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Prov 13:24

24 He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.

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Prov 23:13-14

13 Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. 14 Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death.

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Prov 29:15

15 The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother.

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Do not pamper your child, but discipline the child to get him on the right track of life. Do not bully your child, lest you turn him to a bitter and unhappy person. Do not make your child rebellious through too much nagging. In love, correct and discipline him. Do not pour out your frustrations on your children all in the name of training. Be gentle and caring while you discipline your child.

5. Their investigative nature.

Children are investigative in nature. They want to know everything around them. They want to understand why you don't want them to touch certain things or do certain things even when they have been instructed about those things. It is your responsibility to instruct and educate them about things so they don't get into trouble. Keep them from dangerous items or things that can harm them.

6. Their inventive nature.

Children are always trying their hands on anything that catches their attention. Do not kill their creative drive, but guide them as they grow up for you never can tell what your child might become. However watch them so they don't experiment with dangerous items and fall into trouble.

7. Their inquisitive nature.

Children ask a lot of questions about everything. They are very inquisitive. Sometimes, many parents get impatient and angry with their children for the numerous questions

they are asking. Some even ignore them completely. Please give attention to their questions and answer them accurately otherwise, the child will soon begin to think that you don't care and never ask you any question in future especially in matters of relationship. Don't cut your child off from your person. Remember, what you teach the child the child will believe for the child came without any knowledge. The knowledge you give the child, the child will hold unto and work with.

EFFECTS OF PARTIAL PARENTAL LOVE AND DISCIPLINE IN THE FAMILY

Parents keep asking questions like: Can parents have equal love for all their children? What of stubborn and reckless children in comparison with well behaved ones? Is it not natural to love and care for the one that obeys you? These questions are commonly asked because of prevailing situations in some families. The Bible sheds some light on the negative effects of partial parental love.

Gen 25:20-28

20 and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean. 21 Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. 22 The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. 23 The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger." 24 When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. 25 The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. 26 After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them. 27 The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents. 28 Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

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This partial love divided the two boys among the parents. It led to Rebekah aiding Jacob to cheat Esau of his blessings. It affected the family such that Jacob ran for his life aided by his mother. Jacob's parents died in the absence of Jacob. The family became divided with parental partial love at its root.

Gen 37:3-5

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made a richly ornamented robe for him. 4 When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him. 5 Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more.

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1. There are realities of parental partiality in showing love towards children and other family members. Consequences of such partiality also abound in some families.
2. Motives for parental partiality could be as a result of:
 - Children's behaviour and temperaments.
 - Benefits either mother or father derives from one child or the other.
 - Dispositions and personality traits of children.
3. The unpleasant negative effects of partial love on children:
 - It breeds jealousy and hatred amongst members of the family.
 - It leads to some destructive actions.
 - It divides parents and causes disaffection.
 - The end result is always a bitter and regrettable one.
4. Parents should avoid partial love and treatments because:
 - Human beings are God's creation.
 - We cannot all be the same.
 - Parents have natural and divine responsibilities over their children irrespective of their behavior.
 - Partisanship is a sin and a social evil.
5. How to avoid parental partial love in the family:
 - Determine to place equal value on all your children at all times.
 - Love all your children from the heart and not from the head and mouth.
 - Avoid special treatments, special petting and special care for a particular child. Do not make special dresses for any particular child.
 - Discipline all the children alike. Do not overlook some while you punish others for the same offence.
 - Do not favor some with your public statements while you condemn others.
 - Mould the character of all your children with the word of God and strict supervision and discipline where necessary.
 - Treat your handicapped children with equal amount of care, concern and love. Children are gifts from the God that should be handled with care. Do not allow partisanship to bring you bitterness even in your old age like Isaac and Rebekah.

Remember this:

- The family is the first school of relationship every human has.
- The values formed in the family is what each person takes into the larger society and lives by.
- Any child spoilt by his family will definitely live a spoilt life, but, any child well trained will live like a well trained person.
- Do not leave the training of your children to your grandma, maid or neighbours. Train them yourself.
- It is the duty of both parents to train their children.
- Parental partial love is dangerous for the children and the family. Treat all your children the same way. Let there be no special love for a particular child.

- Be there for your child and your child will not bring you disgrace.
- Make out time, and patiently answer the numerous questions from your children.