

**Intro:**

We began our day with a message bringing warning to Christian parents about their responsibilities in child rearing. We talked about the danger of creating a resentful, rebellious child.

The antidote for provoking a child to wrath is found in the second part of our passage.

I gave this message at the recent Northwest Regional FBF conference. As I introduced that message, I offered a few comments by way of introduction...

My topic today is Christian child rearing. I was asked to speak on the topic largely due, I believe, to the testimony of my children.

- It is rather amazing to me that someone like me should have such children, and surely it is the grace of God that produced them.
- I also still speak with caution on my part, since, as my wife says, “We still have corn standing in the field.”

[If we live long enough, we’ll probably still be saying that when they are 60.]

Speaking of my wife – I thought to give her ‘the gift of time’ for her birthday...

- I was thinking of a resort at Tofino on our Vancouver Island: relaxation, quiet time, meditation, study and thinking about our topic, etc.
- My wife says “No! I need to go to a mall!” So it’s Bellingham, the malls, and she whipped me at bowling — not only did I have to go *shopping*, I also endured *humiliation*.

But really, before we get into our topic, I should make something emphatically clear:

*If you adopt anything of what I preach to you today for your own philosophy, let it be because of one thing:*

- *NOT because it ‘worked’ for Don Johnson!*
- *BUT because it is right, sent from God, the very Word of God, and nothing else.*

I will endeavour to give you my philosophy of child training as faithfully and ably as I can, and I hope that I have gotten this philosophy from the Lord and His Word.

I believe that I have, but we are very easily self-deceived. As Rm 3.23 says,

*All have sinned and are coming short of the glory of God.*

The ‘all’ in that verse refers, actually, to believing people.

Turn again Ephesians 6.4

“Nurture and admonition” — from these words I have given my message this title:

*Disciplined Admonition*

I could sum up these words and my philosophy with two slogans I have adopted to describe Biblical child-rearing:

1. Never negotiate with terrorists.
2. Shock and awe

Seriously, we all want our little children and the children of our churches to grow up to be people who love the Lord and are willing to commit their whole lives to serving Him.

Recently, Hudson Taylor’s great-grandson died (March 20, 2009) at the age of 79, having served a lifetime as a missionary with Hudson Taylor’s organization. They are not exactly where we are in terms of ecclesiastical association, but this is a remarkable record nonetheless.

Hudson Taylor’s great-grandfather was converted in the Wesley revivals.

- Hudson Taylor’s grand-father was a fine Christian man, a reed-maker
- His father was a chemist (druggist) a
- Then you have the testimony of Hudson Taylor...
- And his son...
- And his grandson...
- And his great-grandson...

And still generations following – more than seven generations of Christians and counting...

That is what we want in child-training, is it not?

**Proposition:** The mission of Christian parents is the faithful administration of the Lord’s disciplined admonition to their children.

## I. The manner of disciplined admonition ('not provoking')

*We dealt with this in the earlier message, so let me just say this here:*

- A. It is a grievous sin to do provoke one of the Lord's little ones to wrath
- B. It is important to keep a watch on yourself in how you discipline your children, lest you do provoke them to wrath
  - 1. Be aware of when I am tired and likely to lash out
  - 2. Any discipline must be for them, and not for me
    - a. Many people discipline their kids to get them to "quit 'bugging' me"
    - b. Others discipline simply because "the kid embarrasses me"

That kind of discipline is all about me, not about them.

It is about my convenience, not their benefit

## II. The meaning of disciplined admonition

- A. The structure of our passage
  - 1. A negative command "provoke not"
  - 2. A strong adversative "but" (αλλά)
  - 3. A positive command 'bring them up'
  - 4. A qualifying phrase, describing how to bring them up
- B. The components of child-rearing: discipline and admonition
  - 1. The phrase describes the 'sphere' of child-raising

Lange's commentary: "Thus the element is denoted in which the bringing up should be consummated."<sup>1</sup>

- 2. The notion of discipline (KJV – 'nurture')
  - a. A badly misunderstood word
    - 1) Due to cultural pressure
    - 2) Due to evangelical compromise! (see, my contending for the faith seeps in!)

We live in a feminized culture and that culture has worked an evil influence on the church, including the fundamentalist church.

<sup>1</sup> Lange, Vol. 10, p. 212.

- b. Two contrasting words
- 1) Nurture: soft connotations (nourishment, development)
  - 2) Discipline: hard connotations (restriction, punishment)
- c. The Greek word: παιδεία – instruction
- 1) The Greek concept is the training of the whole man
    - a) Educational
    - b) Political
    - c) Social
    - d) Physical

παιδεία, παιδεύειν, denotes the upbringing and handling of the child which is growing up to maturity and which thus needs direction, teaching, instruction and a certain measure of compulsion in the form of discipline or even chastisement. παιδεία is both the way of education and cultivation which has to be traversed and also the goal which is to be attained.<sup>2</sup>

- 2) For the Greeks, instruction (παιδεία) is first of all a family responsibility
  - a) Demands good character from those giving or providing the instruction
  - b) Is intended to form the life for usefulness in the *polis*, in the city, *i.e.* to make a good functioning citizen within the civil sphere

The Greek culture has come to inform this word in modern and even Christian circles as well.

There is some value to the Greek concept, but...

- d. Greek culture is not Biblical usage
- 1) OT usage related to the discipline and correction provided by the restrictions of the law and the words of the prophets

<sup>2</sup> *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vols. 5-9 edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Vol. 10 compiled by Ronald Pitkin., ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed., 5:596 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-c1976).

- 2) “In the NT as also in the OT and the Apocrypha παιδεία and its verb παιδεύειν mean education *per molestias* [by means of trouble, annoyance], *discipline*, instruction by *correction or chastening*.”<sup>3</sup>
- a) Six uses of the noun in NT
- i) Here
  - ii) 2 Tim 3.16 “instruction in righteousness”
  - iii) Heb 12 – chastening passages
- b) Almost all uses of the verb in the NT carry the same connotation

Prominent illustration, Lk 23.16

(part of this will be in the “Touchy-Feely Uber-Sensitive, Ultra Modern Version”)

**Lk 23.14-16** behold, I, having examined *him* before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: <sup>15</sup> No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. <sup>16</sup> I will therefore “nurture” him and release him. (TFUSUMV)

- There is a marginal reading to this version: ‘I will therefore “educate the whole man”, and release him.’

How about the Red-Neck Fundie Version: “I’ll *learn him one*, and release him!”

In the National Post, a recent article called “Doing the Right Thing”, about raising ‘moral’ children had this comment:

“Those who study and write about morality say there are some common elements present when morality sticks: religion or some code that substitutes for it, parents who not only teach morality but show it by example, and, most interestingly, a belief by parents that their children will not become good on their own.”<sup>4</sup>

### 3. The notion of admonition

- a. Lit. ‘to put in the mind’

<sup>3</sup> S. D. F. Salmand, “Ephesians” in *Expositor’s Greek Testament*, W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., Vol. 3, p. 377.

<sup>4</sup> *National Post*, “Doing the right thing”, 3/20/09

- b. Not merely ‘διδάσκειν’ – intellectual impartation of facts
- c. But ‘νοθετεῖν’ – to have an effect on the will and disposition, presupposing opposition to be overcome

“It seeks to correct the mind, to put right what is wrong, to improve the spiritual attitude.”<sup>5</sup>

#### 4. The notions in combination

- a. Work and word

“The former consists in *work*, the latter in *word*; the former is discipline, not merely punishment, also strict ordering of the household, accustoming it to self-denial, serviceableness, confession of faults without shuffling. Heb 12.6-7. The latter comprises earnest warning (1 Cor 10.11) and kind exhortation (Tit 3.10; Rm 15.14; Col 3.16, 1.28; 1 Cor 4.14; 1 Th 5.14; 2 Th 3.15), which evidently predominates over serious rebukes. It is important that the former come first, and this last.”<sup>6</sup>

- b. Hendiadys – through two, one

- 1) ‘*nice and warm*’ = ‘nicely warm’
- 2) discipline and admonition = disciplined admonition

#### 5. Some applications

- a. We had married a bit older than some, and had seen bratty kids – and didn’t want any. We were determined to tolerate no opposition early on.
- b. Teaching individual responsibilities (job list for cleaning day)
- c. Picking up toys (supervised, spoon in hand)
- d. Personal devotions (checking up on them)
- e. Confession and forgiveness

Taught them to say, “I was wrong when I \_\_\_\_\_ Name The Sin \_\_\_\_\_, will you forgive me ...” when settling squabbles between siblings

<sup>5</sup> TDNT, 4:1019.

<sup>6</sup> Lange, Vol. 10, p. 212.

f. The 5 questions for discipline:

- 1) What did you do?
- 2) Was it right or wrong?
- 3) What do you think I ought to do about it?
- 4) What else could you have done?
- 5) What will you do next time?<sup>7</sup>

We wanted the children to think about their own sin nature, to discern self and sinfulness.

### III. The matter of *The Lord's* disciplined admonition

A. The discipline and admonition *of the Lord*

1. Either a subjective or source genitive
  - a. Disciplined admonition from the Lord, or
  - b. The Lord's disciplined admonition
2. Everything you do in disciplined admonition must be from the Lord.

You must be a disciplined and admonished disciple yourself.

- Do you honour the Lord with your life and time?
- How can you expect your kids to do something differently from you?

B. Let's turn back to the guiding paragraph for our passage (Eph 5.15-21)

This paragraph describes in general the kind of dedicated spiritual life a Christian disciple should be leading:

1. Carefulness of walk
2. Understanding the evil times you live in
3. Understanding the Lord's will
4. Avoiding self-indulgence by being filled with the Spirit
5. Putting yourself in an environment of singing and thanksgiving to the Lord
6. Putting yourself in right relations with one another (5.21)

<sup>7</sup> Ed Dobson, *What the Bible really says about Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage*, pp. 151-152.

Your walk is vital – you can't teach what you don't live.

**Conclusion:**

Two things are necessary for you as a Christian parent:

- **Commitment:** commitment to the Christian walk, laying aside distractions that hinder your own life
- **Courage:** courage to take charge of your life and home, putting in place those disciplines from the lord that will put the Lord in your child's mind.