

RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION IN THE CHURCH LIFE

Message Two

The Person, Living and Responsibility of the Parents

Scripture reading: 1 Thes. 1:5; 2 Cor. 6:1; John 1:12-13; 1 John 3:1-2; Phil. 1:19-21a; 3:10; Deut. 6:7; Psa. 78:5-7; Joel 1:3; Acts 2:38-39; Eph. 6:4; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15; Gal. 6:7-8

I. God pays more attention to what we are than to what we do or to what we can do; He cares for the kind of person we are and for the kind of life we live—1 Thes. 1:5:

- A. In the church the most important thing is the person; the person is the way and the person is the Lord's work—John 5:19; 6:57; Phil. 1:19-26; Acts 20:18-35; Matt. 7:17-18; 12:33-37.
- B. The head of the household manages the family by his person; it is the person that manages the family, not a method that does it—2 Cor. 6:1, footnote 1; Rev. 21:16:
 - 1. To do anything, first there is the need of a person to do it; next comes the method; there is no need for a good method of administration; rather, there is the need of a good person for administration—Exo. 4:10, footnote 1.
 - 2. As soon as we become involved with methods we fall into pretense; genuineness denotes a consistency within and without—cf. 32:19-21.

II. We need to see that we are God-men, born of God and belonging to God's species; this is the beginning of the God-man living—John 1:12-13; 1 John 3:2:

- A. We are regenerated of God the Spirit to be spirits—gods (John 3:6b) belonging to the species of God to see and enter into the kingdom of God—John 1:12-13; 3:3, 5-6; 1 John 3:9:
 - 1. If we realize that, as children of God, we are God in life and in nature, we will be radically changed; the atmosphere and everything related to us will also be changed—John 1:12-13; 1 John 3:2.
 - 2. If all of today's Christians realized that they were God in life and in nature, the whole world would be different—Acts 17:6.
 - 3. When we think of ourselves as God-men, this thinking, this realization, revolutionizes us in our daily experience—Eph. 4:22-24.
- B. We need to have a God-man living in our married life—Phil. 1:19-21a; 3:10:
 - 1. "Do we live Christ at home with our husband or wife and with our children? We need a real revival to be God-men who live a life of always denying ourselves and being crucified to live Christ for the expression of God"—*Life-study of 1 and 2 Chronicles*, p. 77.
 - 2. "We need to be careful in every detail. For instance, when we talk to our spouse, we have to talk according to the spirit. We need to walk in all things according to the spirit (Rom. 8:4). We need to be warned and be on the alert that whatever we say, whatever we do, whatever we express, our attitude, our spirit, and our intention must be purified by the life-giving, compound, all-inclusive Spirit"—p. 49.

III. Apart from the book of Proverbs, the Old Testament does not seem to give us much teaching concerning parenting but there are some good examples—Exo. 12:3-7; Deut. 6:7-9, 20-21; 11:18-21; Psa. 78:5-7; Joel 1:3:

- A. Adam and Eve were saved, and they passed on the word of salvation to the following generation; we also must share these things with our own children, telling them the sad story of man's fall and proclaiming to them the good news of God's salvation—Gen. 3:21; 4:4.
- B. "By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice"; since Abel had such faith, exercised this faith, and offered a sacrifice to God in accordance with this faith, he must have heard the preaching of the glad tidings from his parents—Heb. 11:4.
- C. Noah inherited all the godly ways of his forefathers: Noah inherited Adam's way of salvation, Abel's way of offering, Enosh's way of calling on the name of the Lord, and also inherited Enoch's way of walking with God—Gen. 3:21; 4:4, 26; 5:22.
- D. In the preparation of Moses, God prepared godly parents who infused him with godly thoughts after his birth; through the infusing of his parents, Moses had the godly thought and concept that he needed to rescue the children of Israel—Exo. 2:7-9; Heb. 11:24-25.
- E. With the exception of Joshua and Caleb, those who were qualified and ready to take possession of the good land were younger ones, the second generation—Num. 14:29-31, 38; Deut. 1:35-36:
 1. The second generation did not pass through as much as the first generation did, but they received the benefit of what the first generation experienced—11:2-7; Josh. 1:1-3.
 2. What the older ones experienced was very effective in building up the younger ones; therefore, God could prepare from the second generation more than six hundred thousand men with a rich inheritance and strong background who were qualified to be formed into an army to fight for God's kingdom—Deut. 1:10-11.
 3. The principle is the same with us in the Lord's recovery today; what the older ones have experienced is being passed on to the younger ones and will be very effective in building them up and preparing them to fight with God and for God—2 Tim. 2:2.

IV. The New Testament pays much attention to teachings for parents and does not pay that much attention to teachings about being children; both Ephesians 6 and Colossians 3 put more emphasis on parents than on children—Acts 2:38-39; Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21; 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15:

- A. In summarizing the words in the Bible concerning parenting, the main thing parents should do is nurture their children in the teaching and admonition of the Lord and not provoke them to anger or discourage them; this means that parents must exercise self-control and must not be loose in any way—Eph. 6:4; 1 Thes. 2:7.
- B. Timothy's faith dwelt first in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice and was transmitted to him—2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15; Eph. 6:4.
- C. Mary's poetic praise is composed of many quotations from the Old Testament indicating that the Lord Jesus grew up in a family that was filled with the knowledge and love of God's holy Word—Luke 1:46-55.

V. We must realize that the Christian life is a life of sowing; everything we do is some kind of sowing, either to the flesh or to the Spirit—Gal. 6:7-8:

- A. Everything we say to our children and do with them is a seed sown into them—cf. 2 Tim. 3:10.
- B. In the church life we are constantly sowing tiny seeds; to be careful in our sowing is to be watchful concerning our living—cf. Heb. 13:7.

VI. God's ordained principle is that a father must live a life that is a pattern, an example to his children; nevertheless, we must realize that the way our children turn out ultimately depends on the Lord's mercy—Rom. 9:10-13; Eph. 6:4:

- A. Therefore, we must do our duty to live a proper life as an example to our children, but we should not be discouraged or proud because of how our children turn out; Jacob and Esau were twins, but Romans 9:10-13 shows that their destiny depended on God's selection.
- B. The best and most proper way to be parents is to live as an example to our children and pray for the Lord's mercy.
- C. If our living establishes a proper standard, we are not liable if our children behave badly; however, if we do not live as a pattern, our children's bad behavior is our responsibility.
- D. In order to be a good example, we must love the Lord and His Word, deal with sins, hate the self, and learn the lessons of the cross; this will be an example not only to our children but also to all the saints.