**RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CHILDREN**

Sunday School Lesson 4

*Building Right Relationships*

Proverbs 22:6

3/26/2023

**Introduction:** While we could probably have another lesson dealing with the relationship with your spouse, we are instead going to move forward to the matter of having a proper relationship with your child. The Bible tells us in Psalm 127:3 that children are an heritage of the Lord. We ought to treat them as the precious gift that they are. God has entrusted us as parents to raise our children in a manner that is pleasing to Him. We are to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). It is not always easy to have a proper relationship with our children. Consider that your relationship with your child will endure through every major life stage. You will have to maintain a relationship with them when they are infants, toddlers, children, teenagers, and then adults. How many other relationships in your life include as many changes along the way? Maintaining consistency throughout those various life stages can be especially challenging. Of course, as with all of our relationships, the Lord is there to help us along the way. He has given us much in His Word for us to consider regarding the parent/child dynamic. If we follow the Lord’s guidance, we will position our children in the best possible place to succeed. They may still choose to go away from that position, but that will be a decision they make on their own. Let’s consider the following Biblical principles that parents should heed as they seek to have a proper relationship with their child:

1. **THE PARENT MUST ALWAYS REMEMBER HIS CHIEF OBJECTIVE IN THE RELATIONSHIP.**

* Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. Ephesians 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. 1 Thessalonians 2:11 As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, What is the chief objective of child rearing? Is it to show your child unconditional love? Is it to physically provide for their needs? I believe the Bible shows us through emphasis that the primary objective in the parent/child relationship is teaching/training/instruction. To put it simply, our objective is to train them up in the Word in order to help them to be like Christ. It’s not to be their best friends. It’s not even to love them. Obviously, we should love them as the Heavenly Father loves us, but that’s never the focused command in the Bible. Parental love is likely not mentioned in a commanding way in the Bible because parental love is simply expected, and the idea of a parent not loving his child runs counter to the very nature that God created us with. Thus, we ought to focus our efforts on determining how best to help the child to be like Christ. Of course, that starts with instructing them in, by, and of the Word of God. Help them become what they ought to be for the Lord! If you don’t, who will? Do not place the job of training your child in the Lord on their Sunday School teacher or other spiritual leaders!

1. **THE PARENT MUST UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A RIGHT SPIRIT.**

* Proverbs 25:28 He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls. Proverbs 16:32 He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. Proverbs 14:29; 16:18; 17:22; 18:14This principle is listed second in this lesson because I believe in its importance in the home. Every parent must understand the need for control over their spirit. Of course, as Christians, that control should be given to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Many parents react and handle their children emotionally because they lack proper control of spirit. This does nothing to accomplish the main objective, and it only serves to cause unneeded tension in the parent/child relationship. Not only should the parent emphasize control of his own spirit, but he should also teach the children this important lesson from an early stage. Doing this will pay great dividends in the relationship and in the overall spiritual and even general success of the child. A person who is hasty in spirit exalts folly. He sets himself up for nothing but problems and trouble. Parents must not let their children keep and even further develop an unruly spirit. As the child grows in submission to the Holy Spirit, this should get somewhat easier. Of course, as long as we have flesh, there will always be a challenge in controlling one’s spirit.

1. **THE PARENT MUST HELP TO BREAK THE WILL OF THE CHILD.**

* John 5:30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. Matthew 12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother. 1 Timothy 3:4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; The Lord Jesus shows us the ultimate example of what the child should be like. The child is to have his own will subjected and to submit to the will of the father. That’s what Christ did when He came to fulfill His earthly ministry. He did everything according to the Father’s will. The parent must teach this Christ-like practice to his children. It is your job to bring your child in subjection. This means subject to you as a parent and subject to the Lord. Every child should hear the word “no.” They need to understand that it’s not about what they want or think they need. It’s about the will of the Lord and the will of their parents. As a parent, you need to understand that this is not an easy task. It is a struggle for us to have our own will broken and brought under the subjection of the Lord’s will. You can be certain that the children will have some level of resistance against this, but if you are consistent and stedfast, you can help them to get the victory over their own will. Most importantly, you must pray without ceasing for your child. If they have a hard heart, you’ll need the Lord’s help to break it.

1. **THE PARENT MUST EXPECT PROPER RESPECT FROM THE CHILD.**
   * Hebrews 12:9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? Proverbs 30:17 The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it. Ephesians 6:2 Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; To put it frankly, too many parents today are trying to be “cool” with their children. Kids don’t need cool parents that are on their same level. They need to have parents who are adults that they can look up to and reverence. Again, this ought to be taught from a young age. I’m always amazed when I see the way that parents allow their children to treat them. Who is the adult in the relationship? Who is the one in authority? Why doesn’t the parent expect proper reverence shown from their children? Perhaps, it’s because we are not doing what we ought to be doing as parents; thus, we can’t see a reason why our children would reverence us. Of course, no parent is perfect or truly deserving of reverence; consequently, respect of parents has to come down to a respect of the position and a respect of God’s Word.
2. **THE PARENT MUST BE HONEST AND LIVE HONESTLY.**

* 2 Corinthians 13:7 Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates. 1 Thessalonians 4:12 That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing. Hebrews 13:18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. The Bible commands us to walk honestly toward them that are without. This speaks to our need to point those without Christ to Him through honest conduct. Likewise, we want to point our children to Christ through our honest living. What kind of message are we sending to our children when we behave differently at church or work than we do at home. It tells them that we don’t really believe that which we say that we believe. This will ultimately result in your child either having a lack of trust in you or a lack of trust in the Lord or both! It’s extremely important to live honestly and let your children see that you truly believe the Lord and His Word. If you’ll do this, you will help to give them confidence on their own Christian walk. You will also help them to trust the decisions you make and to see that genuinely care for them and want what’s best.