

Raising Godly Children – 2: Humility, Industriousness, and Self-Worth

(Philippians 2:1-16)

INTRODUCTION:

1. I would like to return to the subject of raising godly children.
 - A. Today I want to consider the parents' role in shaping a child's self-worth, particularly concerning how humility and industriousness play a major role in accomplishing this.
 - B. To do this I want to consider some parental problems I have observed, hopefully provide some helpful "cause and effect" insights, and to compare these decisions/action to the scriptures.
2. It is my hope in doing so to provide for the parents raising children, as well as for all, truth to live by to be blessed in your work in raising children and serving the Lord.

BODY:

I. Parenting problems:

- A. One of the greatest problems in parenting is that children are being raised to be self-centered.
 1. This is not that difficult to do seeing children are naturally self-centered.
 2. Problems arise, however, when parents raise them to think this way, to believe that the *world revolves around them*.
 - a. I am not saying parents intentionally set out to do this.
 - b. Instead, they fall victim to many contributing factors.
 3. Parents who *love* and *appreciate* having children in their lives are prone to do this.
 - a. They want their children to be happy.
 - b. And, giving them what they want and allowing them to do what they want makes them happy...at least for a time.
 4. Affluence
 - a. We are able financially to give our children way too much stuff, which can lead them to believe that their happiness is dependent on *getting what they want*.
 - b. Jesus shows this to be a disservice (Lk. 12:15 – "Then he said to them, "Watch out and guard yourself from all types of greed, because one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." – NET).
 5. Also, some would rather pacify their children than parent them, allowing them to have/do whatever they want rather than correcting/directing that child to a truly happy life.
 6. As a result, we are facing a crisis. Parents think they are making their children happy by doing these things, but instead are raising self-centered/absorbed people whose view of life is causing them to be depressed and angry because the world is not bowing to them.
- B. Another problem related to the matters is what I call the "tail wagging the dog" parenting that is seen in...
 1. **Family Structure:**
 - a. When parents make the family live in the child's world, rather than requiring the child to adapt to the world of the *family*, a child's perception of life will be corrupted.
 - b. Parents run themselves ragged trying to meet their child's every desire, whether it be having to buy the latest toy/gadget, having to fix two meals *every* meal, or having to shuttle them around immediately whenever and wherever the child wants to go.
 - c. Things have definitely changed concerning these matters, seeing this did not happen in the rural farm life of the past.
 2. **Conflict Resolution:**
 - a. Parents will blindly take their child's side in every conflict.
 - i. I see this whether the conflict is with other children, adults, teachers, or Christians.
 - ii. If their child claims something has happened, these helicopter parents are right there giving it to whoever the *child* has said to be the offender!
 - iii. I am amazed that they never consider that someone more mature might have something to say about it that contradicts their child's story.

- b. Another problem is how parents think they have the responsibility to address *every offense* or *slight* their child may or may not have faced.
 - i. No other child is allowed to be a child or imperfect around their child.
 - ii. Anything perceived as a slight/insult to their child must be addressed and punished because their child will not be **bullied**, or whatever.
 - iii. But you might as well say, “I will not have my child living in the real world.”
 - iv. Sometimes you may need to tell them to deal with it, ignore it, etc.
 - v. For, you will not always be by your child’s side to scold the world for its offences and slights. So, train them to be able to deal with life and its problems!
- 3. **Results of self-centeredness** (giving them what they want, over protection, etc.)
 - a. The parental approaches produce a *child* who...
 - i. (More aggressive) Will cause problems for their teachers and fellow students because they have been taught that their desires are *king*, or that they are *always right* and their parents will blindly defend them!
 - ii. (More aggressive) Is an arrogant bully because he/she knows their parents will step in and protect them no matter what they do.
 - iii. Is weak, can’t stand on their own feet, is easily offended, expects others to bend to their feelings, and expects someone else to fix their problem!
 - iv. This last one is why we have such a mess in the young people of our society today and the prevalence of the “victim culture.”
 - b. An *adult* who...
 - i. Is a poor friend, citizen, and employee.
 - 1) Why? Because people make mistakes and society is brutal, and one who cannot deal with a slight will not have friends (except other bullies or victims) and will melt in the real world.
 - 2) Why a poor employee?
 - a) Because the business world expects work to be done how/when **they** want it and is often brutally honest about it without caring about your feelings.
 - b) And so many of the kids today cannot take it! Mama has been coddling them for years and the business world does not really coddle.
 - ii. **A poor Christian**
 - 1) Proverbs 19:11 – “A person’s wisdom makes him slow to anger, and it is his **glory to overlook an offense.**”
 - 2) Ecclesiastes 7:21-22 – “Also, **do not pay attention to everything that people say**; otherwise, you might even hear your servant cursing you. ²² For you know in your own heart that you also have cursed others many times.”
 - 3) Now I am not saying to raise your kids so that they commit offenses and say mean things. And, I am not saying that parents should overlook this in their children.
 - 4) Too many Christian parents train their children to listen and take to heart everything every other child says, and to never overlook an offense! **You are not being wise in doing so.**

II. Humility and godly self-worth

- A. Humility: “a modest or low view of one’s own importance” (**Oxford Dictionary**); a deep sense of one’s (moral) littleness; 3) modesty, lowliness of mind” (**Thayer**)
 - 1. Humility is not about self-defeating feelings of worthlessness, but a realistic view of our own shortcomings and littleness in comparison to God, His power, and holiness.
 - 2. Why is this important to our children’s wellbeing?
- B. Humility, or the lack of it, have *eternal* consequences!
 - 1. Needed to follow Christ (Matt. 16:24 – “Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, **let him deny himself**, and take up his cross, and follow Me.’”). One raised

to believe life is all about them and their wants, that is never allowed to be offended, will struggle with this!

2. Required to receive God's *grace* (1 Pet. 5:5-6 – "Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time...").
 - a. How can one who is led to believe the world revolves around them and that they are always right be convinced that they need **grace** to **save** them?
 - b. How can one raised to believe everyone is to bow to his/her demands ever humble themselves in respect and submission to **God** and **others** as is required of a Christian?
 - c. Christians look to God to exalt them, finding their self-worth in serving Him and others, not serving self.
 3. Necessary to receive forgiveness (1 John 1:8-10 – "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.")! If a child is raised to believe he/she is always right and always to be defended, how will they ever admit to sin, to being wrong?
 4. So, if you truly value your child, you will teach them humility, not false self-importance, for their soul's eternal sake.
- C. True self-worth can only be found in learning to be humble.
1. Humbling ourselves is God's will. So, our maker says a proper life requires humility.
 - a. For, just as we learned last week that the greatest commandment to teach our children is to love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, we should also know that the 2nd greatest command is "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:38).
 - i. That kind of love...loving someone as yourself...requires humility!
 - ii. It requires overlooking the faults, etc., of others, just as you would want them to do for you!
 - b. Jesus was the very example of humility.
 - i. Jesus willingly left heaven, became a man, suffered, and died for *sinners*.
 - ii. So as a Christian parent you must humble yourself and raise your child to be humble to please God (Phil. 2:3-4 – "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."").
 - iii. Again, I know this means training your child not to say/do things that hurt others. But, no child is perfect, and that includes your own!
 2. Humility is needed for happiness now and in the future.
 - a. It is the only path to true greatness (Matt. 23:11-12 – "The greatest among you shall be your servant. ¹² Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."").
 - b. It prepares your child for a good marriage (Eph. 5:22-23, 25 – "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior...²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her").
 - i. Love expressed in selfless humility is the key to a happy marriage.
 - ii. But too many are raised to believe that life is all about them, including marriage!

III. Industriousness and self-worth

- A. Industriousness is defined as "working diligently, hardworking, conscientious, and energetic." (*Encarta Dictionary*)
- B. Why do we need to talk about this?
 1. Laziness is a real problem.

- a. Businesses cannot find workers because people do not want to work.
 - b. And if they do find someone, they either cannot pass drug tests, are not dependable, or will not work the hours needed to succeed!
 - c. That all comes down to how these people were raised.
2. Life in the U.S. has changed.
- a. Young people, like my father and my wife, who grew up on farms, were required to work for the family's well-being, which gave them a *sense of purpose* beyond themselves.
 - b. But that has been lost to "city jobs" and children do not do chores to keep the family afloat. **So, it is easy not to expect much of our children.**
 - c. Therefore, in so many cases, young adults as workers are sorely lacking in the drive, ethic, and toughness needed to succeed in, or even be a part of, the work force!
 - d. So, if you want your child to be a profitable citizen, it is up to you to make them work regularly, even if you have to create it, regardless of their whining.
 - i. And they will whine which will tempt you to think it is easier to do it yourself!
 - ii. You cannot do that because it teaches them that their displeasure expressed in whining gets them out of work and justifies their failure to work!
- C. Industriousness produces godly self-worth:
1. Again, this is true because God made us to work...even in paradise (Gen. 2:15 – "The Lord God took the man and put him in the **garden of Eden to work** it and **keep** it.").
 - a. Hard work to survive is the reality sin brought to this world (cite Gen. 3:17-19).
 - b. Faithful Christians must work to provide for their own needs and not to depend on others (2 Thess. 3:12 – "Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.").
 2. Industriousness shows wisdom (Prov. 6:6-8 – "Go to the ant, O sluggard; **consider her ways, and be wise.** ⁷ Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, ⁸ she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest."). Wisdom = self-motivated work!
 3. Industriousness helps one avoid financial problems (Prov. 24:33-34 – "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, ³⁴ and **poverty will come upon** you like a robber, and **want** like an armed man.").
 4. Industriousness allows one to enjoy one of life's greatest rewards (Eccl. 5:18 – "Behold, what I have seen to be **good** and **fitting** is to eat and drink and **find enjoyment in all the toil** with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, **for this is his lot.**").
 5. Industriousness helps one have a happy marriage.
 - a. One of the main ways to spoil a marriage is for one's spouse to be lazy, seeing this means the other must do double duty to keep things going.
 - b. Laziness brings financial problems, which is one of the major causes of divorce.
 - c. Laziness lowers the quality of life (Eccl. 10:18 – "Through **sloth** the **roof sinks in**, and through **indolence** [laziness] **the house leaks.**").

CONCLUSION:

1. So, of all the people on this earth, Christians should see the need to instill in their children attitudes of selflessness, humility, and industriousness.
2. Be wise with the precious gift God has given you in your children by instilling in them these characteristics so that they can be happy and fulfilled in this life and bring glory to God resulting in the wonderful gift of eternal life.
3. Only you as their parents can do this! Will you come to Jesus in F-R-C-Bp?