

Call to Obedience #331
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
www.schultze.org

"Train up a child in the way he shall go, and when he is old he shall not depart from it."—Proverbs 22:6

TRAIN UP A CHILD

By Pastor Reimar A. C. Schultze

A lot of parents think that good child training guarantees conversion. I believe that although it helps very much, it is not necessarily the case! You can no more make a saint out of a sinner than a sheep out of a goat. Only God can change a heart of stone into a living heart. We cannot convert anyone. So many parents try to convert their children! Jesus says, *"No man can come to me, except the Father draw him"* (John 6:44).

But, yet it is an undeniable, historical fact that parents can do an awful lot to prepare a child's heart to be drawn to God at the slightest whisper from His throne. So parents who carefully and wisely, who prayerfully and lovingly sow the seeds of the Kingdom of God into their little ones, have every reason to expect a harvest in due time. One of the reasons for so few children coming to Christ and staying with Him in adulthood is that mothers have all but abandoned the high and holy calling to full-time motherhood and that fathers have all but left the priestly office that is bestowed upon them as heads of households. Spirituality lukewarm parents have little reason to see neither themselves nor their children in heaven.

Now, dear ones, to train a child in the way he should go, **we have to get involved**. That is our work. Training our children is to instill into them certain behavior patterns, it is to instill into them values that will stay with him the rest of their lives. That's what training means! Our work, fathers and mothers, is training; God's work is conversion.

Training must begin early in childhood. The longer you wait to accomplish it the more difficult it becomes. By the time a child is six to eight months old he should clearly understand the word "No". My wife and I have raised two children from the time they were born. We adopted one when he was one year of age, and another one when he was four. I can tell you from personal experience, that when you don't do things right in the first year and a half of a child you have a tremendous uphill struggle. A child must know within the first year that if it does not obey, there is a consequence. The self-will of a little one is usually easily broken. It is my personal opinion that 80% of a child's training should be done in the first year and a half. If it is done properly there, the rest will be relatively easy.

We need to teach our children to **take disappointment in stride**. Life is full of disappointments. There are disappointments on the job: we generally don't get the job situation we want, or the salaries we desire, or the time off for vacation that we prefer. Sometimes we are not treated the way we want to be treated. We have disappoint-

ments at church. We will meet people who disappoint us. And of course we also disappoint others. We need to teach our children to take disappointments in stride without being upset, without throwing temper tantrums, without going into some kind of coercion to try to change the situation. We have to teach our children to accept and to adapt to life as it is, with cheerfulness. If you give your child everything he wants, when he wants it, you spoil and ruin your child.

We must teach our children never to get anything through pouting, manipulation, screaming, yelling, or through playing one parent against another. If you allow your child to get things that way, you are introducing a criminal element into his mind. By that I mean that when he grows up, he will think he can get around the rules. He will try to evade the tax code, to cheat on the job or in the school, to find his way around the laws of the land by manipulation and intimidation, or by playing one person against another.

We must **teach self-control**. Think about it. Just about everyone who is in jail has a problem with self-control: control of anger, lust, desire for drugs, etc. We must teach our children both to adapt to life, and not to be self-indulgent.

We must **not allow our children to quit**. Once something is started, like piano lessons or violin lessons or a sport or project, you must make them stick to it. Not forever, of course, but for a good season in order to teach them perseverance, self-denial and character. Quitters go nowhere in this life, and nowhere in the hereafter. Quitters will never learn to walk with God. They will not learn to persevere in prayer.

We must **never take the side of a child against authority**; not on the job, not against a church counselor, not against a schoolteacher or anyone else. If you do take the side of a child against any authority, you're sowing distrust and seeds of rebellion in that child's mind against all authority, and eventually against your own authority. The Bible teaches us to submit to all authority. If you disagree with the way your child has been treated by an authority, work it out with that authority but keep the child out of it.

We need to **teach our children manners**. Sisters should treat their brothers like kings; brothers should treat their sisters like queens. One way you do that is by the father treating his wife like a queen and the wife treating her husband like a king. Train your children to chew with their mouths closed and to pass the food on as soon as they have taken some for themselves. Teach them to do all the household chores. Keep them busy with productive tasks and challenges so that there is no time wasted in front of the television. When I raised my children they were allowed only one hour of television each week and I selected the program and watched it with them. Don't allow your children to interrupt a conversation between any two persons. Train them to behave as adults do, even as a young person. In Israel, children become adults at thirteen; over here some of them are not grown up until they are in their twenties, and behave foolishly for many years, with severe consequences.

Train your children to **eat wholesome foods and to drink wholesome drinks**. Do not load their bodies down with food coloring, pesticides, insecticides, animal hormones and the preservatives found in most foods. Do not poison their little bodies. If you do, there will be consequences. Develop in your children an appetite for healthy foods and drinks. Teach your children to sit straight and stand straight. Never allow your children to raid the refrigerator or pantry. Have fixed meals and only specific times for snacks. The snacks also must be healthy. Everyone needs to practice self-control even in how we eat.

Teach your children **personal hygiene**. Fathers, you must approve the clothing style of your son and your daughter. Don't leave those decisions to them or to their peers.

Fathers, train your children to be **slow to judge**. Do that primarily by example, and sometimes by explanation. We never know the whole story of any one case, only God does. The judgmental spirit is no respecter of persons. If you allow your children to judge someone else, eventually they will judge you, too.

Teach your children to **accept a minority mentality**. Train them to shun popularity with man. Train them to want to please God in everything. True Christianity is a minority faith. Train them to be comfortable with it. Train them that this is a fact of life. Having Jesus as a friend is a thousand times more wonderful than having 1000 friends of the world. It is quality that counts and not quantity.

Train your children to **love good workmanship** and success more than money. "*The love of money is the root of all evil*"(1Tim. 6:10). Train them never to spend more money than they make. Train them to give at least 10% of their money to the work of God.

Train your children **not to make excuses**. Read from Genesis to the Revelation and tell me how many times God accepted an excuse. Of course we are not God, but we are the closest examples our children have to Him. If you accept an excuse be very sure it is legitimate.

Train them **never to blame others for their own problems**, for if you don't, they will.

Finally, give them the blessing of this promise "*honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it maybe well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth*" (Eph. 6:3).

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