

PARENTAL STEWARDSHIP

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Precious Gifts from God

Children are precious gifts from God. They are the profoundly marvelous result of His continuous, creative power. Isaac, Jacob and Esau, descendants of Abraham, are described as gifts from God. (Josh. 24:3-4) Jacob and Joseph acknowledged the fact that their children were given to them by God. (Gen. 33:5; 48:9) Isaiah gratefully acknowledged, "Here am I and the children the Lord has given me." (Is. 8:18) Psalm 127:3 declares, "Sons are a heritage from the Lord; children a reward from Him."

Parental Stewardship

Christian stewardship begins with the premise that God owns everything - including children. He demands they be cared for carefully. As God's representatives, parents have been entrusted to be loving stewards of His children. To abuse a child is to abuse a wondrous creation of God. Whoever leads a child astray, faces the condemnation of Jesus to be drowned with a millstone around the neck. (Matt. 18:6) To love a child is a way to love Christ. Jesus says, "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in My name, welcomes Me." (Mark 9:37) The N.T. Greek word for "welcome" (dedzajtai) means: "to receive into one's family in order to bring up and educate; to receive favorably; give ear to; embrace; make one's own; approve, not reject."



Parenting - A Learning Process

People are not born with the essential skills to be good parents. Good parenting involves a continuous learning process. Opportunities for growth in parental stewardship may be found in

parenting books, magazines, talking to others and parenting classes. "Parent Effectiveness Training" (PET), an eight week course by Dr. Thomas Gordon, is available for congregations.

Seven Parenting Suggestions

- 1. Be a Role Model** - Your children learn more from watching you than listening to you.
- 2. Communicate** - Listen carefully and patiently in a genuine, loving way. Let your children know you respect their feelings.
- 3. Delegate Responsibility** - Make your children responsible for household jobs to build self-confidence and feelings of accomplishment.
- 4. Discipline with Love** - Focus on behavior not the person. Do not insult a child's personhood (ie., by yelling: "You idiot! What's wrong with you, you stupid jerk!") Speak to the problem calmly with corrective measures reflecting love.
- 5. Love Unconditionally - the Way God Does.** The N.T. Greek word for love in John 3:16 is "agapay" which involves "forgiving and forgetting and returning evil with good".
- 6. Give Positive Encouragement** - Positive reinforcement, a stated appreciation for accomplishments, is vital to give children the feeling, they are loved, capable and special.
- 7. Spend Quality Time Together** - Pleasant times together heal bruised relationships and help instill security and stability in children.

Training Children for a Life of Christian Stewardship

Children should be trained to manage their lives and life's resources according to God's will and His purposes. They should be shown how to manage time, money, possessions, abilities and responsibilities as Christian stewards. "Tithing" (financially sharing 10% for God's purposes) should be instilled at an early age. Children should be taught to take care of their room, shoes, toys, and clothes, to brush their teeth, to eat and sleep properly, to study regularly, etc., because God has entrusted such things to them for proper management.

Additional Resources

Web Search: "Parent Effectiveness Training"

Web Search: "Amazon.com Earle H. Gaulke" ("Have a Family Where Everybody Wins")