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Train Up a Child – Raising Our Children as the Lord Raises His

01 – Difficult Times Have Come

August 1, 2021

Sermon Text: Genesis 4

Scripture Reading: 1 Samuel 2:12-36

Pro 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

This morning we begin a new series of messages – hopefully found in Scripture and not just my opinion or the ideas of other people. This series is intended to teach us how to raise our children as the Lord raises His children.

The Apostle Paul tells us to *bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*. But what does that look like? How does the Lord discipline His

children and what instruction does He give them?

This subject is what we can call a “hot topic.”

- It is “hot” because so many people claim to be experts on the subject and publish all kinds of books and teaching series about it.
- It is “hot” because so many people are interested in it – that interest being fueled by everything ranging from a desire to raise their children in a right and wise manner, to a deep despair and frustration as to how to handle difficult children.
- And it is a “hot” topic because people have such strong opinions about it which often flare up into arguments and conflict. Just offer some suggestion to a parent or have someone suggest to you something in regard to raising their children or your children and see what happens!

We live in very difficult times, and one of the most difficult things we face is

the challenge of raising up our children and their children so that they fear the Lord, love Christ, love and obey His Word, and love us and others. Listen to Paul on this:

2Ti 3:1-5 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. (2) For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, **disobedient to their parents**, ungrateful, unholy, (3) heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, (4) treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, (5) having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

I have always found it quite interesting that “disobedient to their parents” appears in this list of such severe and intense sins. Paul says that these things will characterize the church age – the last days. Of course there have always been Cains and sons like Eli’s sons, but Paul seems to be warning us that this kind of evil will increase just as evil of all forms will increase. And

we certainly can see from the fact that disobedience to parents is, in God’s evaluation of things, a very, very evil

sin that worships self and refuses to love God. To show us how evil such sin is, check out how it was under the theocracy in Moses’ day-

Deu 21:18-21 “If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and, **though they discipline him**, will not listen to them, (19) then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives, (20) and they shall say to the elders of his city, ‘This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.’ (21) Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones. So you shall purge the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

Notice incidentally that phrase “though they discipline him.” Think about the implications of that requirement.

Notice that this Scripture is a picture – it is a visible warning to the wicked about the end to which they are headed. About where a person is going to wind up who rebels against the Lord.

Some General Observations

Let's be careful to note some basics as we begin our search in God's Word about this subject.

1. There is no formula given to us in the Bible that *guarantees success* in the sense of absolute certainty that if we follow steps abc, our children will grow up to love us and love the Lord. Any "system" that would make such a claim is to be rejected. That which is born of flesh is flesh – it is the Spirit of God who alone effects the new birth.
2. God Himself has rebellious, disobedient children. For example:

Isa 1:2-3 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD has spoken: "Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me. (3) The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand."

I know (as do many of you) godly parents who, though like all of us not perfect, have raised up their children in

the Lord, teaching them His Word, praying for them, giving them the gospel and showing them their need to be born again – and yet some of those children have rebelled, they have loved the world, and in some cases they have even hated their parents. Other children in the same family have come to faith in Christ and love their parents. The wind (the Spirit) blows where He wills.

3. Our relationship with the Lord, our salvation in Christ, *is not ultimately dependent upon whether or not we have godly parents.*

Gen 4:8 Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.

4. I want to be very clear right at the start of this study that when we speak of *discipline* and *instruction*, we know and acknowledge openly that wicked, evil parents who parade themselves as Christians, twist and pervert God's truth into evil justifications for abusing their children. This is one of the devil's tactics. He perverts God's Word

not only to seemingly justify the evil committed by his servants, *but to lead people to totally dismiss God's Word on a particular subject.* People won't hear of "discipline" in Scripture because it has become an evil word to them by its abuse. But that is a great error.

5. Being abused by an evil parent *does not justify sin on our part.* Imagine on the Day when we stand before the Lord and someone says to Him – well, you know how my father was cruel to me, so that is why I rebelled against you." Not gonna work!

6. And probably the most important of all – and it requires real humility on our part – *We must not care about what we think regarding this subject of raising up our children. I need to remind myself, 'I don't care what you think.'* And you need to remind yourself, *'I don't care what Jeff thinks.'* What matter is this: *What does God think?!! What does GOD say!!!?* Because people spout off all kinds of child-raising notions and philosophies that have their origin in themselves or

in some other person. WHAT DOES GOD SAY?!! And what we are going to find more often than perhaps we would like is that what God says is quite different from what we have been saying.

There are probably other preliminary issues that I have not listed here. I hope that anyone listening to this series knows that I understand fully the wickedness of evil abuser sociopath people and that havoc and trauma they cause in families. Nothing in this series of sermons is presented without that in mind. But let's begin.

The Lord Entrusts us With This

Hear these words carefully-

Deu 6:1-25 "Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, (2) that you may fear the LORD your God, **you and your son and your son's son**, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. (3) Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do

them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

(4) “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. (5) You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (6) And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

(7) You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

(8) You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. (9) You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (10) “And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build, (11) and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are

full, (12) then take care lest you forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

(13) It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear. (14) You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you— (15) for the LORD your God in your midst is a jealous God—lest the anger of the LORD your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth.

(16) “You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah. (17) You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies and his statutes, which he has commanded you. (18) And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may go well with you, and that you may go in and take possession of the good land that the LORD swore to give to your fathers (19) by thrusting out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has promised.

(20) “When your son asks you in time to come, ‘What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes

and the rules that the LORD our God has commanded you?’ (21) then you shall say to your son, ‘We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt. And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. (22) And the LORD showed signs and wonders, great and grievous, against Egypt and against Pharaoh and all his household, before our eyes. (23) And he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in and give us the land that he swore to give to our fathers. (24) And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as we are this day. (25) And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us.’

Not only does the Lord entrust us with raising up children (and grandchildren) in the fear and admonition of the Lord, *He commands us to do it.* He tells us what to teach them. He tells us how to teach them. And He holds us accountable for doing so faithfully.

I know of many parents who are disobedient to the Lord in this regard *not because they are actively hating the Lord and teaching their children*

directly some wicked religion or philosophy, but simply because they are passive. They are do-nothings. They are cowards. They refuse to separate from evil – which is most often familial evil.

When we think of this scripture, we are usually thinking of someone who is actively and openly teaching some evil to a child or wickedly abusing a child –

Mat 18:5-6 “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, (6) but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

But can you see that anyone who simply passively doesn't care to bother themselves with the responsibilities God gives them to raise up children in the Lord, *is guilty of this very same warning. How many people are going to wish they had perished in the sea with a stone around their neck rather than having to stand before the Lord and give account of their passivity causing their children to stumble?*

“Why did you not protect your children? Why did you refuse to take

them away from evil? Why did you not hear Me when I said:

Mat 10:37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

Think this through. What kind of a person would refuse to protect their children from say, a murderer breaking into their home? What would you call a parent who just sat back and said “take the kids but don’t hurt me”?

Well, the Bible says, *God says... that refusing to protect our children from evil people no matter if they are family members or not, is even more serious.*

We think for example that this is unimaginable evil –

Deu 12:31 You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way, for every abominable thing that the LORD hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods.

But how many cowardly, disobedient parents today are in fact burning their

sons and daughters in the fire to their family gods?

The religion of many people who claim to be Christians is just like this:

2Ki 17:32-33 They also feared the LORD and appointed from among themselves all sorts of people as priests of the high places, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places. (33) So they feared the LORD but also served their own gods, after the manner of the nations from among whom they had been carried away.

They serve the Lord and they serve their mother. They serve the Lord and they worship their children. The Lord Jesus has told us plainly, He will never accept this kind of religion. He demands exclusive worship, all of our love, all of our heart. This kind of religion is the same as burning our children to Molech.

The Lord has commanded us to raise up our children in His discipline and instruction, and His command is to be obeyed.

This Business of Pro-Creation

Now, you all know that we live in an immoral, wicked world where sin of all kinds is rampant. We have all kinds of euphemisms we use for what the Bible calls fornication, sin, and other evil – *living together, sleeping together, gender neutral, pro-choice, etc.* Those kinds of phrases are used to minimize sin and to subtly work to gain our acceptance.

But God's Word says that He created human beings with the capacity for reproduction – as a good thing!

Gen 1:27-28 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (28) And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Sexuality between husband and wife is a good thing ordained by God. Among other purposes such as a one-flesh relationship, this capacity is for human beings to reproduce. God's intent was and still is for His people to fill the earth and rule over it – something that is

ultimately happening in Christ as the New Heavens and Earth grow and come into their fullness when Christ comes again.

So we have been entrusted with this sexual reproductive capacity. BUT when man in his sin decides to exercise this gift in any way he decides he wants to...great evil is done and God's wrath is aroused. Think of it carefully-

Human beings have the capacity to bring another human being into existence. And the Lord entrusts us with nurturing and caring for that child, especially nurturing and caring for the child's soul.

So, what happens when people decide they are going to exercise their sexuality in any manner they please? And what happens when this wickedness results in a baby being born? Here is this little child. Totally dependent upon parents for its care. But where are the parents? Where is the father? Where is the mother? Where is the family God intends for children to be raised in? I can tell you – *nowhere.*

Do you realize that thousands and thousands of children today do not even know who their father is? Is it any

wonder that they find family in gangs? That they don't even know what a wedding is?

Or, closer to home with this application – what of those men and women who do get married, and they have children, but they determine that they will write their own “user manuals” and ignore God's instruction. Even though many such people claim to be Christians?

Last week Verla and I went out on the ocean and the new secondary sonar unit would not display on the screen. We tried a few things with it but to no avail and since the ocean was bouncing us around pretty good, we just left it to deal with when we got home.

Later that day I went out and started pushing buttons. I knew it had power and was turning on because I could hear the beep. But nothing worked. So I took drastic action – I googled it and found the user manual. Turns out all that needed to be done was to turn it on and tap the power button a couple of times and presto! The display came on. Somehow we had inadvertently hit some button that dimmed the backlighting on it.

User manuals. How complicated is a human being? Even that little newborn? I suspect that the circuitry of a baby is most likely a lot more complex than a sonar unit. And more than that – the child has a mind and a soul. Do you know how to care for a soul? Do we consult the User manual, or do we just act like we know and keep pushing buttons?

To help you analyze your answer, just listen to these few verses from Proverbs as we conclude, and admit to yourself – *they sound rather foreign to us and we quickly try to explain them away to make them more palatable to our taste* –

Pro 13:24 Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.

Pro 19:18 Discipline your son, for there is hope; do not set your heart on putting him to death.

Pro 22:15 Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him.

Pro 23:13-14 Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he will not die. (14) If

you strike him with the rod, you will save his soul from Sheol.

Pro 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.

Pro 29:17 Discipline your son, and he will give you rest; he will give delight to your heart.

There is, you see, a very real way in which parents work with the Lord to save their children's soul from hell. To refuse to obey the Lord in this is to set ourselves upon putting our children to death – to eternal death. It is to hate our children.

May the Lord powerfully bless this series from His Word, reprove and correct us where correction is necessary, and encourage us as well.