

Ephesians - Commentaries by J.C. Ryle

How Should a Child Be Trained?, Train Them to a Habit of Prompt Obedience. (6:1,14)

This is an object which it is worth any labor to attain. No habit I suspect has such an influence over our lives as this. Parents, determine to make your children obey you, though it may cost you much trouble and cost them many tears. Let there be no questioning and reasoning and disputing and delaying and answering again. When you give them a command, let them see plainly that you will have it done. It is the mark of well-trained children that they do whatsoever their parents command them. Where indeed is the honor which Ephesians 6:1 enjoins, if fathers and mothers are not obeyed, cheerfully, willingly and at once (Eph. 6:14; Col. 3:20)?

Early obedience has all Scripture on its side. It is said in Abraham's praise, not merely he will train his family, but "he will command his children and his household after him" (Gen. 18:19). It is said of the Lord Jesus Himself that when He was young He was subject to Mary and Joseph (Luke 2:51). Mark how the Apostle Paul names disobedience to parents as one of the bad signs of the last days (2 Tim. 3:2).

Parents, do you wish to see your children happy? Take care then that you train them to obey when they are spoken to — to do as they are bid. Believe me, we are not made for entire independence; we are not fit for it. Even Christ's freemen have a yoke to wear — they "serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:24). Children cannot learn too soon that this is a world in which we are not intended to rule and that we are never in our right place until we know how to obey. Teach them to obey while young, or else they will be fretting against God all their lives long and will wear themselves out with the vain idea of being independent of His control.

You will see many in this day who allow their children to choose and think for themselves long before they are able, and they even make excuses for their disobedience, as if it were a thing not to be blamed. To my eyes, a parent who is always yielding and a child who is always having its own way is a most painful sight — painful because I see God's appointed order of things inverted and turned upside down, and painful because I feel sure the consequence to that child's character in the end will be self-will and self-conceit.

How Should a Child Be Trained?, How Should a Child Be Trained? (6:4)

"Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

How little is this text regarded! We live in days when there is a mighty zeal for education, new schools rising on all sides, new systems and new books of every description for training the young. These things may well give rise to great searchings of heart. The subject is one that should come home to every conscience; there is hardly a household that it does not touch.

This is preeminently a subject in which we can see the faults of our neighbors more clearly than our own. We need to suspect our own judgment. I have sometimes been perfectly astonished at the slowness of sensible Christian parents to allow that their children are in the fault or deserve blame.

Come now and let us have before us a few hints — words in season. Reject them not, because they are blunt and simple.

clickbible.org