

RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION FOR THE CHURCH LIFE

Message One

The Children's Work being to Build Children Up in their Humanity to be Proper Human Beings

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 3:7; Matt. 19:19; Prov. 22:6; 2 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 6:1-2, 4; Rom. 9:21,
23; 13:1
2 Tim. 2:20-21; Gal. 3:24; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Cor. 3:2

- I. Today, many young people have been damaged with respect to their character; it is because of this that we have a children's work for the children; we need to build up their character—1 Tim. 3:7; Acts 6:3; Prov. 28:20a:**
 - A. The children must be built up as proper human beings; this is a matter of character, that is, behavior and habit—Matt. 5:16.
 - B. From their youth they must learn to honor their parents, love their brothers and sisters, and respect others—19:19.
 - C. We do not need to give the young ones too much knowledge of the Bible; we should rather build them up with the proper ethics and morality that will constitute a proper character—Prov. 22:6.

- II. Character has very much to do with the Lord's service; consider those persons in the Bible whom God used; they were used by God because they possessed a character that was fit for His use—Rom. 12:1; Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 2:21; 4:11:**
 - A. Since Abraham, Moses, and Paul all had an excellent character, God greatly used them; the destiny of our usefulness to the Lord hinges on our character—Acts 15:40; Luke 24:27; Matt. 1:2.
 - B. Character is a serious matter; the measure of grace we receive of the Lord and the degree to which the function of that grace is manifested are determined by the kind of character that we have—Eph. 4:7; 1 Pet. 4:10.

- III. To build up a proper humanity is the way to prepare the children to be the best material to receive God's grace—Rom. 9:21, 23; 2 Tim. 2:20-21; 1 Pet. 2:5; Matt. 16:18:**
 - A. It is best to help the children grow up in their humanity by helping them know what a proper human being is; how to honor their parents, and how to be a proper child—Eph. 6:1-2; Col. 1:10; Prov. 22:6.
 - B. Since our families are part of the fallen race, we parents must exercise God's ordination to restrict our children by ethical teachings, regulations, and discipline.
 - C. For proper human living in your home, you must teach your children to behave properly by honoring their parents, caring for their brothers and sisters, respecting their neighbors, and not stealing—v. 6; Eph. 6:4.
 - D. Because children are too young to behave according to Christ, they must be taught to behave according to culture; children are preserved by culture while they are growing up—Rom. 13:1; Gal. 3:23.
 - E. In caring for their children, Christian parents need to preach the law to them; we should not first preach grace to the children; if we give them regulations according to the law, the law will keep them in custody for Christ—2 Tim. 3:15; Rom. 13:1; Gal. 3:24.

IV. To compile material for the teachers, we need a number of brothers who know the truth and are also skilled in writing—1 Tim. 3:15; 2:4; Titus 1:1:

- A. We should give the five- and six-year-olds one thing and the seven- and eight-year-olds something else; we need some brothers and sisters who understand this principle to prepare the lessons—1 John 2:12-13.
- B. This requires the careful work of the brothers who compile the teaching material so that the children do not receive premature knowledge—1 Tim. 1:4; Mark 4:8, 11:
 - 1. The most important matter is to build up the humanity and character of the children; this is neglected by many parents today.
 - 2. There is the need for some brothers and sisters to spend the time to prepare lessons and instructions on how to use them—Rom. 12:7; cf. 2 Tim. 2:22; 1 John 2:27.
 - 3. We should not prepare uniform printed lessons to be read in each class; perhaps half a page of points, illustrations, and instructions is adequate; it should be easy to prepare lessons in this way.

V. When many of us were young, we received too much knowledge that only damaged us; we were given many stories, but we were not given the proper verses in a practical way—1 Cor. 3:2; Titus 3:9; 1 Cor. 8:2-3:

- A. After hearing all the teachings and stories from the Bible, young ones become "slippery" so that nothing sticks to them; we must not spoil the young ones in this way.
- B. Those who have never heard the stories before are easily inspired by them; this is why we should withhold certain stories and simply help the children to know the things of humanity and of God in a practical way—Phil. 4:9.
- C. Then when they are saved and begin to attend the church meetings, what they hear will be new to them.
- D. We have to beware of two things; first, there is the possibility of premature spiritual knowledge; second, we can give away biblical truths too cheaply:
 - 1. Some teachers are too spiritual; they tell children teachings that are too high and too spiritual; this gives the children premature spiritual knowledge—1 Cor. 3:2.
 - 2. Other teachers treat spiritual things too lightly in an attempt to make the children understand; their speaking does not do justice to the spiritual weight of their subject; this gives away the truth too cheaply—John 5:39; 1 Tim. 6:19.