

# Sheltering Children; God's Mandate to Holiness

(Part 2)

*“Come out from among them and be separate,’ says the Lord.  
‘Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.” (2 Cor. 6:17)*

What does this mean? And how should it apply to the way we raise our children? Apparently God's design for us and our children is to maintain the purity and *holiness* for us and them; to understand and apply the principle of separation from the world. But how much separate should we be?

One of the best examples of this *holy peculiarity* was the Nazirite, and one of them John the Baptist. He dressed peculiarly, ate peculiarly, talked peculiarly--his whole lifestyle was eccentric. Was John the Baptist well socialized? Absolutely not! He was apparently raised in isolation as an *only child*. He lived out in the wilderness, away from civilization. But was he "salt?" Yes! He polarized the nation with his stingingly salty message! Was he a "light?" John the apostle wrote (John 1:8), **“He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.”** Jesus said (Matthew 11:11) **“among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist.”**

Yes, John the Baptist was a light for God in the world. But how? By being so totally separate from the world that they were attracted to him like moths. I pray that my child will be *socialized* like John. While I certainly train him to exhibit social graces to enhance his current and future servanthood, I want him to fearlessly confront the world with a gospel he not only articulate, but LIVE BOLDLY!

Another accusations leveled against dedicated Christian parents is that we are raising *naive* children. We are charged with not letting them see the *real* world. What does the world alternative or choice opposite to ‘naive’ is to have children who are street-wise and smart rebels in contradict to the word of God and the teaching of Jesus. This is a perversion of God's ideal. In fact, what the world labels "naive" the Bible calls "pure." Jesus said (Matthew 5:8), **“Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.”** In other words, if we have pure hearts our attention will always gravitate to what God is doing. Paul wrote (Titus 1:15), **“To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.”** God calls us to raise children who are "holy." They are to be different from the world, but their peculiarity is to be marked by "purity". Not to get involved in dirty jokes, watching wrong television programs and shows, and not to get involve in pornography and immoralities. We are called to live in holiness and raise our children to live in holiness.

Such holiness is not based on human efforts to follow man-made codes of moral conduct. Although outward indications of holiness will certainly be evident but the real issue is in our children's hearts. Paul wrote, **“For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.” (Galatians 5:17)** Paul was writing to Christians. We must recognize that it is not enough for our children to be born again. Holiness is the result of sanctification. One aspect of cooperating with the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work is that

we must purpose to **“make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.” (Romans 13:14)** What does it mean to not make **“provision for the flesh?”** There is a war ongoing between the flesh and the Spirit within each of us and within each of our children.

Jesus taught us to pray to our Heavenly Father (Luke 11:2-4) **“Our Father... do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil one.”** Why should we seek to be spared "temptation?" Some of us are confident of our ability to resist temptation, so we actually welcome the conflict. But Paul directed Timothy not to engage temptation in a fight, but to flee—**“Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” (2 Timothy 2:22)** It is not enough to commit ourselves to abstain from sin; we must even avoid the temptation, making **“no provision for the flesh.”** We can easily see the fault in a drunkard who has been delivered from alcohol still hanging out in front of a pop. But do we fall into the same trap in less obvious ways? Or do we make provision for our children's flesh through such things as their playmates, toys, reading wrong material, listening bad music, watching evil television programs, and so forth?

**My Dear and Beloved:** I have been convicted of failing to "sanctify" (consecrate, set apart) my child as the Lord intends. Through the provisions I make for my flesh, I am making my child vulnerable to temptation. While I ask my Heavenly Father to **“Lead me not into temptation,”** I am leading my child into temptation. Jesus said, **“Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to the man by whom the offense comes!” (Matthew 18:7)** He prefaced this by warning, **“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.” (Matthew 18:6)** We have always applied these scriptural threats to those who perpetrate such abominations as molestation, kidnapping, child pornography, and so forth. But now I wonder if God is speaking more to parents who have the mandate to protect their children from ungodly influences. This becomes particularly clear when we continue through the next few verses and find Jesus commanding us to pluck out, cut off, and cast away whatever causes us to sin. This mandate is clearly given in the context of children, **“<sup>6</sup> But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. <sup>7</sup> “Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come! <sup>8</sup> If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. <sup>9</sup> And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell. <sup>10</sup> “See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.” (Matthew 18:6-10)**

**My Prayer:** Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord I commit myself to separate from the world and I commit myself to raise up my children and train them to exhibit social graces to enhance their current and future servanthood, I want them to fearlessly confront the world with a gospel they not only articulate, but live Boldly unto you, this is my prayer in Jesus name Amen.