

Train A Child With Love

*“Train the child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.”
(Proverbs 22:6)*

Storge means the ‘natural affection’ between a mother and child. No doubt about the love of any father or mother toward their own children. But how do they put that love into practice? The expression of human love for children may spring from a selfish or selfless attitude of the heart.

Narcissism or the love for one’s own self (selfish love) could yield the love toward children. Children in blood and flesh are part of parents and naturally belong to them. The parents may have dreams, goals or ambitions which they did not achieve in their life and they want to achieve it through the life of their children. The essence is the expression of a selfish or a self-centered love of parents toward children.

God’s love reflects a selfless expression of love. It is directed not only toward a worthy child that came out from our own flesh, or the intelligent, handsome and talented one, but extended even to the children whom we are not the natural parents, and to those who are unworthy, the sick, the crippled, the ugly looking, the orphan and the children of the destitute. God’s love shows no favouritism, it is constant, priceless, endless, and willing to sacrifice.

When God created Adam and Eve, *“God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.’” (Genesis 1:28a)* God’s order in this regard is not only to increase in number or quantity (a horizontal direction), but to increase the quality of what is being reproduced. Being fruitful does not only refer to the production of fruits but reproduction of good fruits. “No-one desires sour grapes or tasteless melon.” We must therefore reproduce children of good quality.

In the Bible the word of God spoke about man and woman relationship and declared, *“Has not the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are His. And why one? Because he was seeking godly children.” (Malachi 2:15a)*

Godly children are the pivot of the message for this week. To raise up godly children is the purpose of marriage and child rearing. Actually, it is a great task that we need wisdom to accomplish and from the Bible we will receive, and by God’s word and power we can achieve. May the love of God that is described above fill our hearts so that we can accept the explanation of this week’s verse:

Train the Child: If we observe the animals we can see that they train their children. The sparrow teaches its chicks how to fly, the duck teaches its ducklings how to swim, and the lioness teaches its little ones how to prey. Their training is essential for their life. Imagine, how will the lion live if he cannot prey? But good training requires conditions:

1. Enough time: Every aspect of the children’s lives cover certain period of time to learn, and it is our obligation to be with them. Certain time is needed for them to learn how to read, to write, how to speak politely, how to clean and dress themselves, how to sing and pray. The question is, do the parents, the home, the school, the society or the church give enough time to train the children?

2. Enough effort: To train children we need much patience and tremendous effort. It is like running a hospital or managing a company. Well-developed countries continually provide new programs of high

standards for children’s training. However, the parents should exert greater effort and offer more sacrifices to build up better generations. And two parents are far better than single parent in rendering this effort. The school, society, or church programs added to parent’s efforts would make the situation effective and successful.

3) Enough concern: How we care or look to a child describes our concern for children. How do you compare a child standing beside an adult? Rarely, we can find people who do not underrate a child, or give an equal importance to an adult person. We are to be reminded that children have feelings, emotions, opinions, visions, questions and demands as equal as those of adults, but we usually fail to acknowledge.

4) Enough burdens: Our hearts should be filled with burden when we train children. This burden pushes us forward to achieve a successful mission in training and praying for them.

5) Enough budget: In many occasions, the cheapest measure will not achieve the greatest purpose. Good training requires good food, clothing, accommodation, school and educational materials. These are essentials and worth-spending for the best benefit of our children.

In the way he should go: Children have two things in common. They have ability to learn, and high ability to imitate. These innate abilities are beneficial to children if the responsible parents train them with God’s love and God-fearing manner. But such ability is a curse if those who have authority over the children are abusive, proud, selfish, full of anger and bitterness. “What you sow, you reap.” Train a child with compassion and you will reap love and honour.

There are two roads of life: The narrow, the difficult but the safest way, and the wide, easy but dangerous way that leads to destruction. The first is the road of righteousness, and the second is the road of wickedness. In which way are we raising up our children?

Situation # 1: A clean tidy, quite, polite child, with wholesome talks on his mouth. He believes in God and knows how to read the Bible. He prays and sings praises to God. He knows how to express love, gives respect and helps others. He is humble, successful in his studies and at school. He has good relation with other children, listens to his parents’ instruction, and keeps away from the lawless habits.

Situation # 2: A dirty, malnourished, unhealthy looking child, dressed with ragged clothes, Impolite, with unwholesome words coming out of his mouth. Dwelling in the street, out of school. With bad habit of smoking, drinking, using drugs and pornography. Talking foolish things with coarse jokes. Fits of rage and anger, rebellious, quarrelsome, blaspheming the name of the Lord, doing evil and even crimes.

It is on our hands to train the children in the way they should go. We are responsible and accountable because the authority over them was given to us, not to anyone else. Some of the children in the world are abused, sold and bought for pleasure and vices, sexually harassed, enslaved for work, and living with an inhumane lifestyle.

If the first part of the verse has conditions that we need to do, the second part of the verse is God’s promise that we will receive spontaneously if we do the conditions properly and diligently. If we train our children with Godly manner and expression, we will have Godly offspring’s that we can be proud of, righteous people, good parents for the next generation, healthy Christians, and families. They will become accountable leaders to the society, faithful to God and His instructions, useful workers and leaders for tomorrow, builders of nation for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

My Dear and Beloved: I stop here but you may go on meditating the verse, and invite the Holy Spirit to speak directly to you as you commit yourself to **train the child in the way they should go**, the child or children that God entrusted to you, as you agree to pray.

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 God thank you for your word that gives me deep understanding about my responsibility toward the children that you gave to me. Lord guides me and helps me to nurture them and teach them in the way that you want me to grow and go. Provide me Lord my needs so I can do your work, this is my prayer in Jesus name, Amen.*