

THE ROLE OF CHILDREN IN THE CHURCH (3)

The role of children can only be completely understood when the role of men and women is also clear and being exercised. A child is a future adult who has yet to learn the basic principles of life (physical, emotional, social and spiritual) and the differences that gender demand and provide. They need to be taught about spiritual and natural responsibilities and benefits... they need to be trained with the same principles that will equally apply when they are an adult. In fact, all of life is governed by the same divine plan... all we do is learn to grow into the life that has been so wonderfully designed and provided for us. We will review the basics principles of adult life then move on to children.

****Creation Principle One...** God made men and women in his image. God made man as a leader and woman as a helper (both reflect the glory of God... both are equal in the sight of God).*

****Creation Principle Two...** God created men and women to be divided into family units. God identified himself as our father and made it clear that we would be bound to one partner and produce children... just as he had done.*

****Failing One...** Men are more than willing to allow women to take the lead in spiritual matters. For the same reason, men also have a tendency to avoid parental training, mentoring and decision making.*

****Failing Two...** God made women attractive to men (the first thing they became aware of after they ate the fruit was they were naked... their sexual characteristics were awakened)... this led to children.*

The solutions for failings one and two, focus on honouring the roles that God has given us... the same solution also serves to identify the roles of good parenting (in principal, children have the same needs as adults... it's just that they lack life maturity and physical stature)... they need nurturing and training to become effective adults... they need total commitment.

EPH 5:23 For the **husband is the head of the wife**, even as **Christ is the head of the church**: and **he is the saviour of the body**.

24 Therefore as the **church is subject unto Christ**, so let the **wives be to their own husbands** in every thing.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as **Christ also loved the church**, and **gave himself for it**;

33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so **love his wife even as himself**; and the **wife see that she reverence her husband**. *God compares his responsibilities towards us, with our responsibilities towards each other... one is a mirror image of the other. He identifies his leadership and our subjection... he then draws the same parallel between a husband and wife (the correct attitude of the man is given by the example of Christ for us. Likewise, the correct attitude that a woman should live by, is likened to the church's expected attitude towards God). With these principles revealed and explained, Paul goes on to address the needs and attitudes that children should aspire to and be tutored in.*

EPH 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

2 Honour (revere, respect) thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise [blessing];) *This principle goes right back to the second book in the bible. EXO 20: 3* Thou shalt have no other gods before me. *This is the first, of the ten commandments. It is all about knowing and keeping priorities... God comes first... again we see and continue to see, one principle mirroring the other.*

12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. *The first four laws relate to God, while the fifth is the beginning of our priorities between humans... yet again we see a mirror between ourselves and God. We are bound to honour and respect each other... starting with our parents (this attitude does not end when we reach our adult years; we need to respect our parents for all of life). Children need to be taught obedience and self control as they develop.*

3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. *This is a wonderful promise.*

4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. *also... COL 3:21* Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. *The trust that children have in their parents should not be corrupted by bad parenting. As parents, we must learn that children have limits and varying capacities, no two are the same. Most importantly, we are forbidden from hindering or destroying the faith of a child. Raising children teaches us the skill to raise God's children as well... one also being a mirror of the other... likewise we are forbidden from ruining the faith of any of God's family. 2COR 2:7* So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. *These skills are perfected through experience and direction, just as a child must learn what is good and right. The child takes on the image of the parents, thus the skills that they will have as an adult are being taught all through their childhood years. They in turn will walk in the Lord and raise their children in a like manner. This is God's will... this is God's image!*