

# **Fort Payne church of Christ**



## **The Weekly Moment**

*A Weekly Motivational Message*

Wednesday, May 1, 2019

### ***Exploring Parental Duties***

Mel Futrell

In 380 B.C. the Greek Philosopher Plato wrote:

*“Are you not risking the greatest of your possessions? For children are your riches; and upon their turning out well or ill depends the whole order of their father’s house.”*

Although this ancient statement is not God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16), it has a ring of truth. How children turn out is certainly related to the kind of training they do or don’t receive in *“their father’s house”*. We can’t emphasize enough that parents have duties. And these duties are a function and obligation of the home, not the state. What might some of these essential duties be?

***First, parents have the duty to teach their children.*** The full range of what they should be taught is beyond the scope of this article. But certainly all Christians would agree that it should begin with the Holy Scriptures (Romans 1:2). Any way about it, the home should be a school of learning. Even under the law of Moses parents had the daily duty of dispensing the commandments of God to their children. The classic passage covering this parental responsibility is Deuteronomy 6:6-7 which says:

***“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”***

In the New Testament we see a perfect example of what should happen from the home life of Timothy. The apostle Paul is fully aware that from a child Timothy had known the Holy Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:15). It is likewise transparently obvious that his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice were responsible for this teaching (2 Timothy 1:5). We must take seriously the duty of teaching our children. If we are truly seeking ***“first the kingdom of God and his righteousness”*** (Matthew 6:33), won’t this be manifested as well in the teaching and training of our children? We answer Yes!

**Second, parents have the duty to provide for their children.** This of course requires that parents work. Here we appeal to the principle of 1 Timothy 5:8 which reads, ***“But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”*** We recognize that in the immediate context this verse is addressing provision for the widow. Yet it is a fundamental Christian duty that one’s family is to be provided for. Children are family. Thus, children are to be provided for. Who would deny that this would include at bare minimum reasonable housing, proper clothing, and adequate food? The lazy person who fails to pro-vide for his own is described by Paul as being *“worse than an infidel.”* It is evident that some don’t have a mind for work (Nehemiah 4:6), and their children end up paying the price for the parents’ laziness. Such parents would be wise to consider the ant (Proverbs 6:6).

Third, parents have the duty to control their children. As the father of three [grown women now], I certainly subscribe to this. And as a preacher who is in scores of different homes every year where many times children are present, I know what it is to leave a home questioning who is in charge. It seems to me that in order for control to be present there must be some who command and others who comply. The question then becomes, *“Who is to command and who is to comply?”* I remind you that Ephesians 6:1 says, ***“Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right.”*** That really ought to settle the matter. However, permit me to share with you what the Bible commentator Matthew Henry (1662-1714), had to say about Paul’s words, *“It is the order of nature that parents command and children obey.”* 1 As you well know, it was relative to this very issue wherein old Eli failed. The Scriptures say of this family, ***“Because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not”*** (1 Samuel 3:13). Countless Christian families have paid a steep price because they too failed to control their kids.

**Fourth, parents have the duty to correct their children.** And this correction, as is evident in both the Old and New Testaments, will on occasion take the form of corporal punishment. Corporal punishment is physical punishment — that which affects the body. Several proverbs from the book of Proverbs deal directly with the discipline of children in one form or another. Just a sampling of these is worth our attention:

- ***“He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes”*** (13:24).
- ***“Chasten thy son while there is hope and let not thy soul spare for his crying”*** (19:18).
- ***“Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him”*** (22:15).
- ***“The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame”*** (29:15).

In the New Testament the matter of correction is dealt with plainly in Hebrews 12:9 which reads, ***“Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and live?”*** Of special note to us here is the word *“corrected”* which is from the Greek word *paideutes* meaning *“one who disciplines.”* Interestingly, *paideutes* is from *paideuo* which means, depending on the context, to *“instruct, train, teach; discipline, correct; whip.”* To correct, even to physically correct, one’s child is not to abuse that child, but to administer the proper discipline to match the transgression.

The habits that our children form now, whether good or bad, will likely be with them throughout their adult lives. Surely this should be motivation enough to propel us toward our own parental duties.

- From the ***Shades Mountain Messenger***

Think about it.

Here’s hoping you’ll make the *“most of your minutes”* this week.

Hope to see you at Bible Study tonight.

In Christian Love,

*Bob Strickland*