

## CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

717 North Stapley Drive, Mesa, AZ 85203 Phone: (480) 833-7500

<b>Series:</b>	<b>The Heidelberg Catechism</b>		Pastor/Teacher
<b>Number:</b>	<b>70</b>		Gary L.W. Johnson
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### The Home's Order and the Church's Role in Child Training

#### 39. Lord's Day

##### Question 104. What does God require in the fifth commandment?

**Answer:** That I show all honour, love and fidelity, to my father and mother, and all in authority over me, and submit myself to their good instruction and correction, with due obedience; (a) and also patiently bear with their weaknesses and infirmities, (b) since it pleases God to govern us by their hand. (c)

In 1703, Jonathan Edwards was born. He is considered to be one of the great geniuses of all time. More importantly, he was a great Christian whose influence is still being felt in the church today.<sup>1</sup> His parents invested a tremendous amount of time in him, so that by the early age of 13, he entered Yale from which he graduated at the head of his class in 1720. He married Sarah Pierrepont in 1728. They had eleven children. Since then there have been over fourteen hundred identified descendants of Jonathan and Sarah Edwards: over four hundred were college graduates; thirteen college presidents; more than seventy college professors; over sixty physicians, many of them very eminent; more than a hundred ministers of the gospel; sixty became prominent writers and journalists; more than a hundred became lawyers and a good portion of these served as judges; the remaining two hundred or so became prominent in the various fields of science and engineering. The rest, for the most part, were identified as being solid members of their communities. In 1720, the progenitor of the famous Jukes family was born. He was a shiftless drunkard. Of his descendants, not one ever made any valuable contribution to the world, but in a hundred and fifty years at least twelve hundred had been occupants of penal and insane institutions. More than four hundred were viciously diseased; fifty were notorious prostitutes; sixty-nine were thieves who spent an average of twelve years in prisons; seven were murderers. In 1740, another infamous character named Ada Take was born. The record of her descendants is similar to that of Jukes. Over one hundred of her some seven hundred descendants were illegitimate children; a hundred and eighty-one were prostitutes; a hundred and forty-two were beggars; forty-six were inmates of mental asylums; and seventy-six were criminals.<sup>2</sup> The influence of the home is without doubt the greatest single factor in child training. We close this brief series with an examination of the Home's Order and the role of the church.

#### I. HUSBANDS AND FATHERS

The husband is appointed by God to be the *head* of the home (Ephesians 5:23). The Greek word head is KEPHALĒ. In the Septuagint it is used to translate the Hebrew word R'OSH which was used to indicate one in a position of authority or command – and that is how the word is used in Ephesians 5:23 (cf. Ephesians 1:22-23).<sup>3</sup> Being the head, the husband-father of the home is placed in a position of great responsibility. "Nowadays," wrote A.W. Pink, "the father thinks that he has fulfilled his obligation by providing food and raiment for his children,

and by acting occasionally as a kind of moral policeman."<sup>4</sup> The Apostle Paul spells out exactly what is expected of the head of the house.

#### A. The Role of the Husband

The husband is to love his wife (as Christ loved His Bride, the Church [Ephesians 5:25-33]). This *positive* command is set off against a *negative* one, "Do not be harsh with your wife." The word *harsh* is PIKRAINESTHE (in the imperative) and it means, "to be bitter, incensed, angry." The word implies that a husband vents his anger at his wife even if she is not the cause for his irritation.<sup>5</sup> Arthur S. Way catches the Apostle's language by rendering it, "Husbands, be loving to your wives: do not say stinging things to them."<sup>6</sup>

#### B. The Role of the Father

Fathers are commanded "not to *embitter* (NIV); *exasperate* (NASB); *provoke* (KJV) your children." The Greek word ERETHIZŌ means "to irritate or embitter; to make or cause someone to feel resentment."<sup>7</sup> The command is given so that the children will not become *discouraged*, ATHUMEŌ, literally "to lose spirit, or become timid." In other words, the child gives up trying to please the over-demanding (and nagging) parent because it's a no-win situation. The positive counterpart is given in Ephesians 6:4, where fathers are instructed to raise their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. "There should be firm guidance, not servitude,"<sup>8</sup> or as McCalley so aptly put it, "If a wrong is to be corrected by discipline, then a right is to be enforced by praise."<sup>9</sup>

## II. TWO KINDS OF PARENTS (Proverbs 13:24)

The Bible is very direct – two kinds of parents: those who hate their children and those who love their children.

#### A. The Parent Who Hates the Child

Notice how this *hatred* is expressed. The Hebrew word is SĀNĒ and it is a very strong word. It refers to that which is not only the opposite of love, but is actually an expression of loathing. It is used of God's hatred for idols (Zechariah 8:17; Isaiah 1:13-15; Deuteronomy 16:22; cf. also Proverbs 6:16). The term is used of man's hatred for God (Exodus 20:5; Deuteronomy 5:9; II Chronicles 19:2; Psalm 22:8).<sup>10</sup> Neglecting to discipline is, in the eyes of the Lord, evidence of hatred on the part of the parent. The word translated "spareth" or "spares" the rod is the Hebrew word HĀSAK<sup>11</sup> and means to refrain or hold back. It conveys the idea of neglect. It should be noted that the action is continuous, meaning that this is a set pattern. The worst possible thing a parent can do is to leave the child to his own judgment – simply letting the child have its way is a form of child abuse according to the Bible. The Hebrew word for "rod" is SHABAT.<sup>12</sup> This word is used in at least two different ways: (1) literally, in terms of corporal punishment; (2) symbolically, in reference to authority. Thus a parent who fails to exercise authority (which would include corporal punishment) is failing to love the child.

#### B. The Parent Who Loves the Child

Love is seen in certain actions and the parent will demonstrate love in the best interest of the child – even if the child strongly disagrees! Here this love is seen in the word "chasteneth" (KJV), "discipline" (NIV). The Hebrew word is MUSĀR.<sup>13</sup> It involves three concepts: (1) punishment, and this means physical as well as verbal (cf. Isaiah 53:5 where the word is used of Christ's physical afflictions); (2) the concept of rebuke or correction (cf. Job 20:3); (3) It also involves instruction (cf. Isaiah 8:11). Finally, note the word translated "early" (KJV), "diligently" (NASB), "careful" is SHANAR.<sup>14</sup> It literally refers to time of darkness prior to dawn, thus the early morning. "Satan," wrote Charles

Bridges, "begins with the infant in arms! (Psalm 58:3; Isaiah 48:8)... Every vice commences in the nursery."<sup>15</sup>

### III. WIVES AND MOTHERS

The instructions given to wives in the New Testament are as follows: She is to *respect* her husband (Ephesians 5:33). The word translated *respect* is PHOBĒTAI, "to give reverence." In Colossians 3:18, she is said to *be subject* to her husband. HUPOTASSOMAI is a military term, meaning "to line up under or place under" (subordinate). It is in the middle voice; thus this is done willingly by the wife. This is said to be "fitting in the Lord." It is the proper *attitude* that is the issue, not the outward act per se. How does this bear on child training? The setting in the home will have as much an impact on the children as will verbal instruction and correction. The family *structure*, as designed by God, is one of the major factors in child training. Paul told Titus that older women were to "encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored" (Titus 2:3-5). Thus the model home for child training begins with a proper understanding of the home's order.

### IV. THE CHURCH'S PART

The church and the home are closely related. Both were instituted by God and each has an obligation to complement the ministry of the other. "Strong homes make good churches, and spiritual churches can be of great value to the building of homes."<sup>16</sup> The church, however, does not replace the home in raising children. The church is not a glorified day-care center. Rather, the church is a corporate body of God's people who meet to worship the Lord and receive instruction and edification from the Word of God, so as to be equipped to serve God. In this sense the church is an extended family. Therefore, the church is responsible for the welfare and spiritual well-being of its people. As in the home, so in the church, there must be respect for and submission to the proper authorities.

**CONCLUSION:** We have referred to the church as an extended family, but it is also true to say that the family is a miniature church. Parents, especially fathers, are directed to teach and admonish their children in the fear of the Lord. Our children are our heritage from God (Psalm 127:3), and God has instructed parents to instruct their children (Deuteronomy 6:6-9). The church should assist and serve the family to that end. This should be a top priority with us, and may God help us in every step of the way. The pattern of truth that we hand down to our children is the greatest legacy we can possibly give them.

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<sup>1</sup> There are a number of excellent sources on Edwards. Here are two: Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (Greenwood Press, 1949); and Iain Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography* (The Banner of Truth Trust, 1987).

<sup>2</sup> Gordon Hurlbutt, *Window and Wings* (The Standard Press, 1928), p. 139.

<sup>3</sup> KEPHALĒ can sometimes mean "origin" or "source" (as in Colossians 1:15-20). For an excellent discussion of this word, see James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Zondervan, 1981), pp. 162-171.

<sup>4</sup> A.W. Pink, *The Ten Commandments* (Guardian Press, 1976), p. 69.

<sup>5</sup> *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* VI, ed. G. Friedrich, trans. G.W. Bromiley (Eerdmans, 1968), p. 125.

<sup>6</sup> Arthur S. Way, was a noted classical scholar who translated many of the Greek classics into English. His volume, *The Letters of St. Paul* (McMillan, 1906), though long out of print, is an outstanding piece of scholarship.

<sup>7</sup> *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* I, eds. J.P. Louw and E.A. Nida (United Bible Society, 1988), p. 761. The word serves to mark "a causative relation, with the implication of stimulating a change in motivation or attitude" (p. 805).

<sup>8</sup> P.T. O'Brien, *Word Biblical Commentary: Colossians, Philemon* (Word, 1982), p. 226.

<sup>9</sup> Chester McCalley, *Duty to Discipline* (Word of Truth, 1977), p. 33.

<sup>10</sup> *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* II, ed. R.L. Harris (Moody, 1980), p. 880.

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<sup>11</sup> The word is a qal participle and is used in Genesis 22:12 of Abraham not withholding Isaac from the Lord. Cf. *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew Aramaic Lexicon* (rpt. AP&A, 1980), p. 362.

<sup>12</sup> This word is also used to refer to a staff like a shepherd would carry. Cf. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* II, p. 1079.

<sup>13</sup> The Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) translates this word with PAIDEUŌ which stresses the notion of education. The thought is simply this, correction results in education. Of particular interest is the way this word is used of God and His people (cf. Deuteronomy 8:2, 3, 5; 32:6). Hence, the theological basis for an earthly father's discipline over his son is likened to the covenant faithfulness of God in disciplining His children for their own good (cf. Hebrews 12:7-11), cf. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* I, p. 386.

<sup>14</sup> The word is used in Genesis 26:31 of getting up early in the morning. In Jeremiah 7:13 the word is used with the idea of doing something "earnestly – continuously." In Judges 7:1 it refers to being "busy." Thus, the overall thought is getting an early start so as to accomplish the task at hand. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* II, p. 924.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Bridges, *Proverbs* (The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), p. 169.

<sup>16</sup> W.W. Orr, *Children Can Be Taught to Obey* (Scripture Press, 1967), p. 28.