



Church of Christ

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Heart to Heart...

Raising faithful children is a difficult task. Raising children is not as difficult. God expects fathers to raise their children in His ways (Eph.6:4). How do parents train their children to be faithful to the Lord?

It must begin by the parent's relationship to the Lord. Many parents have the idea that reading Bible stories or taking them to church will end up with faithful children to the Lord. While it's true our children need to be read to from God's word and they need to see the importance of the assembly, that's not all there is. Parents need to **train** their children in the ways of God. Training takes time and an understanding by the parents. Children need **training** to be givers, not takers. Children need to be **trained** in thankfulness rather than wanting more. God is a lover of others, not a self-centered consumer. Parents need to **train** their children to be content, not wanting. If parents aren't content with what they have, it will produce unthankful, selfish desires within their children. Look at the parents who buy their children things just to control them when they throw a fit! Instead of self-control (fruit of the spirit) and learning "no", they are **trained** in manipulating to get what they want. It's called a "*heart trained ingreed*" (II Pet.2:14). What we are seeing is parents not understanding the will of God. Parents **train** their children to be "*lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness?*" (II Tim.3:4-5). Hunting, fishing, shopping, sporting events become what is sought after. Lives become focused on these things rather than God's life. Our children are **trained** in being religious, not dedicated to His cause, which will cost them their souls.

Children need to be **trained** to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, strength and mind. That happens only if parents have that commitment within them. We need to **train** our children to sacrifice on behalf of others. That takes a committed parents. Look at little children and their innocence. Their trust is amazing, their love astonishes us at times and their heart is so pure. Little by little, they become corrupted by sin and that innocence is lost. They take on the attitudes in which they were **trained** in as little children. Parents are left wondering what happened to that little boy or girl who use to love singing, "Jesus loves me>" They grow up not having anything to do with God or His church. Parents weren't **training** their children in the ways of God and the dealing with the horror of sin. Children easily pick up the deceit and falsehood demonstrated in the actions of their parents. For some, it's too late to go back and do over again. That's why we have the blood of Christ and the mercies of God. For those with little ones today, you need to take a hard look at what your children are being **trained** in. You need to look at yourself as a parent and ask, "Am I surrendered 100% to the Lord?"

Raising children is not overly difficult. Just raise them in the ways of the world, to love the world and the things in the world. Raising faithful children is very difficult as their spiritual insight comes from their parent's relationship to the Lord. How are you raising your children? Think about it!!!

Brent