

Church of Christ

... Heart to Heart ...

God puts the responsibility of training/teaching and discipline of the child on the shoulders of the father (Eph. 6:4; Col.3:21). That does not mean the mother doesn't train or discipline, but it is up to fathers to make sure the direction of the home is set.

Someone has said, "I wish the children came with an instruction manual." They do and it's called God's word. It's just many times parents aren't interested in applying the principles to their own lives so the children are left to fend for themselves spiritually. One of the greatest principles of training your children in the ways of the Lord is teaching them to respect authority. We see that in the very beginning of God's word, when the Lord told Adam and Eve "*not to eat from it or touch it, or you will die.*" (Gen. 3:3) The lack of respect for the authority of God sent man into all sorts of evil desires and harmful practices. When our children aren't taught the respect for authority, their lives take them on a road that will do them great harm.

We have seen it happen. A child is in a public place (or at home too), the parent calls out to stop or come here and the child keeps right on going. No response and if they get one, it's a laughing response like playing a game. Parents have allowed this to a point they see no harm. "They are just being a kid!" is the comment. It's a matter of respect for your authority and if a child doesn't respect the authority of the parent, they are headed to a lack of respect for others down the road. Anytime your child will not follow your instruction, they are in serious trouble. What we fail to see as parents is that until obedience and respect for authority become a part of your children's life, they will grow up with less respect for you as they age and have little regard for God.

The games we as parents play with our children can be very destructive without us realizing it before it's too late. For instance, we ask our children to do something or not do something. The child makes no response. Then we go into the game mode of counting, buying them off by offering them a treat if they will do what you ask or threaten without acting. This isn't training your children in the Lord! The Lord says this is what I want and if we don't listen, it costs us dearly. Our children need to understand early on that by not listening and acting on your word, there will be pain involved.

Getting our children to listen to our voice and respect authority builds three key ingredients in them: (1) Trust. They know you have their best interest at heart. (2) Respect. They know you will do as you say. (3) Love. These three things will become a part of their lives and lead them into the very heart of God.

"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him." (Prov. 22:15) More next week. Think about it!!!