

Church of Christ

...Heart to Heart...

Our children need to be trained in the teachings and attitudes of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). One major aspect is teaching them to have a healthy, godly respect for authority, something Jesus had while He walked on this earth.

I had a father speak with me once about why their son (who was now 17) would not listen to anyone in authority. The child rebelled against the parents and would not take any direction from other adults. It didn't take long to discover: the father refused authority himself! The father never abides by the seat belt law as he thought they were stupid and controlling. Wonder what the child was being trained in? He was an avid fisherman and always kept more than his limit. In his own words, "So we could fill our freezer and eat!" Just these two things showed the attitude of the father toward authority. Words might not be spoken, but the spirit of the father spoke volumes to their son! "Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God." (Rom. 13:1)

A crucial area of teaching/training our children to respect authority is to be consistent in our words. When you speak, back it up immediately if there is no response. Jesus said to let your yes be yes and your no be no (Matt. 5:37). If we aren't learning from the Lord, it's hard to train our children in proper ways. Don't allow your child to drag you into begging, yelling or just ignoring their tantrums. Respond according to your word with consistency, which trains them to respect authority.

Sometimes parents shower their children with gifts or awards when they do right. Is that what the Lord does to us? The doing of good is not rewarded, but expected (Luke 17:7-10). When a child goes beyond what is expected, then praise them. The world is influencing our thinking and the training of our children. The world is turning out children that are very disrespectful toward any authority, the opposite of what God wants, and offers them a reward if they will do good! That's not God's way.

At times, you wonder who has the authority in the home. Many children are running the home and the parents allow it. A child doesn't get their way, throws a fit and the parent responds with some kind of reward or buy-off. "If you will do this or that, then I'll..." The authority of the parent is lost at this point. God guides us and He rules, not us. We need to use that same teaching in our homes. No means no! No questions, no fits, no buy-offs but a submissive heart in trusting in your words.

What are you teaching your children? Do they respect your authority? We might take a hard look at what we are training them in if they don't. Fathers, it is time to step up and be a father as God expects. More next week. Think about it!!!

Brent