

*“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...” (1 Peter 4:11).*

Volume 13

November 3, 2024

Number 44

## PARENTS, HOLD FAST AS PARENTS

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When God ordained the home, He ordained the husband and wife relationship, and the authority of parents over children. This arrangement is based on the true meaning of love and is designed by God to bless the husband, the wife, and child, and all humanity.

*“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:1-4).*

*“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged” (Col. 3:18-21).*

Parents need to hold fast in asserting the authority God has given them for the good of the child.

God did not ordain children to rule the household nor command parents to obey their

children. Children do not have the “right” to defy their parents, nor do parents have the right to ignore it when they do.

Asserting parental authority does not require abuse but does require appropriate discipline. Liberal-minded psychologists are wrong and the Bible is right:

*“He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes” (Prov. 13:24).*

*“Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying” (Prov. 19:18).*

*“Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him” (Prov. 22:15).*

*“Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die” (Prov. 23:13).*

*“The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame” (Prov. 29:15).*

*“Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul” (Prov. 29:17).*

When children disobey and defy their parents, parents need to hold fast by teaching their children that such conduct has very unpleasant consequences.

When parents fail to exercise the proper leadership over their children, they sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. By giving in to a child’s stubborn demands, a parent

curse both himself and his child. *“Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil” (Eccl. 8:11).* Each time the child gets his way in defiance of parental authority, he will encroach more and more upon that authority.

The child who is allowed to pursue such a course eventually becomes a curse not only to himself and his parents but also to everyone around him. The church suffers from the example of young people who rebel against both God and man. Society at large suffers from the effects of such conduct. A young person who persists in this path will ultimately destroy himself. *“The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it” (Prov. 30:17).*

Parents who hold fast in exercising their God given authority are a blessing to the home, the church, and the nation. Deep in their souls, young people yearn for the leadership which only their parents can give. Proper leadership is shown by having Bible reading and prayer in the home, and by being faithful participants in the work and worship of the local church. Leadership is shown by parents making themselves available to their children, spending time

with them, and being interested in their children's activities. Parents show leadership by insisting that their children prepare their lessons not only for school but also for Bible classes. Parents can show leadership by opening their homes to their children and their children's friends for social and recreational activities of the right kind.

Parents need to hold fast in exerting the power of leadership with reference to moral standards and decisions in the home. Parents need to say "no" to hard drugs, alcohol, fornication, abortion, pornography, profanity, temper tantrums, gambling (including the lottery and raffle tickets), immodest dress, dancing (including the prom!), and all forms of disrespectful language and conduct. Say "no" and mean it! Say "no" and back it up with consequences!

Parents and not children should decide on appropriate TV programs, yes, even if the child has a TV in his own room. The parent and not the child should have the final say on what kind of music is listened to. Parents and not children should have the final say on standards of modest dress, and

nothing should be allowed above the knees when standing or sitting. Parents and not young people should set the curfew for nighttime activities.

Where possible and appropriate we should be flexible in matters of judgment, but the parent and not the child is to have the final say. We should discuss and explain our standards and decisions when possible, but train our children to respect us even when they do not fully understand all the whys and wherefores of our decisions. We may certainly yield to our children's preferences in certain matters, and even change our minds on such matters, but there can be no negotiations where principles of right and wrong are involved.

Asserting this kind of leadership and authority is easier said than done, but it must be done no matter how hard it gets. Someone named Patsy Lovell told about a conflict with her daughter over whether she would be allowed to buy a miniskirt. Her daughter insisted on having one but the mother said "no". The daughter protested several times and in several ways, but Mrs. Lovell held fast and said "no." Later the daughter apologized and

said, "I was scared that you were going to let me win!" Reading this article is a reminder that young people need and want loving leadership (Patsy G. Lovell, "Hold Fast," *Focus on the Family*, Oct. 1993, p. 14).

When I taught high school, I required a certain class to bring parental permission slips for a field trip. One young man who had a gruff, macho, independent air said that there was no need for him to get one. "My parents don't care where I go, when I leave, or when I get back," he said with a sad look. That was twenty years ago but I have never forgotten it. In spite of his independent air, he was crying out for loving leadership.

Parents, let us hold fast to God and to the role he has given us as parents! If we are lost from God, we can come to him through Christ by faith, repentance, and baptism (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38). If we have done that and fallen away, we can return by repentance and prayer (Acts 8:22). If we hold fast to God, He will hold fast to us, and He will help us to hold fast as parents.

*Guardian of Truth*,  
Vol. XXXVIII, 1994  
pp. 179-181

**The Terre Haute **SPEAKER**** is published weekly by the church of Christ at Terre Haute, Indiana.

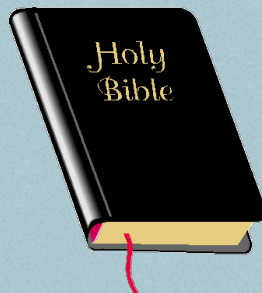
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