

SCRIPTURE READING: Exodus 20:1-17 & Judges 2:1-15

SINGING: 284:1-3 – 38:1, 4, 5 – 213:1-4 - 50:1-3 – 425:4, 5, 6

OPENING OBSERVATIONS

- The family altar would alter many a family: *We must forever despair of seeing a spirit of piety in the world, till we are happy to see a revival of family religion.* (Whitefield)
- The Church is in shambles because the family altar is in shambles.

GOD’S CALL TO TRAIN CHILDREN

I. Who are called? II. What is the call?

III. How we are encouraged to obey the call?

I. Who are called to train up our children?

A. All in governing or leading positions but mostly ‘the parents’

1. Parenting is the *main task* anyone who has a family has in life
2. Best imagery to describe parenting is *shepherding*
3. The final purpose of parenting is *guiding our children to leave us well*

I

I. What is the directive which God gives us?

A. Hebrew word “training” has various rich meanings

1. to give first dip – seasoning – tincture of wood/vessel (Deut. 6:7)
2. to put into mouth
3. to dedicate – set apart – devote to God for holy uses

B. Hebrew word for “way” refers to *our manner of thinking & living*

C. Train them in way they *should go* ... not *would go*!

1. ‘way they *would go*’ is effortless
2. ‘way they *should go*’ is impossible through human means
 - a. yet God has promised to bless the most diligent efforts
For grace [of regeneration] is conferred by means of admonitions: and the more readily we perform our duty, the more eminent usually is this blessing of God working in us, and the more directly is His work advanced. (Canons of Dort, III/IV, art 17)
3. yet train them in all the *right virtues – right deeds*

D. Some practical and general applications

1. Make God present throughout the whole day: Deut. 6:7
2. Bear in mind that our children are sanctified (1 Cor. 7:14)
3. Parenting is to direct our children to Christ (Col. 1:28-29)
4. Teach them to read and understand Scripture
5. Be sure to instill *Biblical thinking about God's principles* as basis for all our choices, actions, direction
6. Make time for 'family prayer'
7. Sing together according to Eph. 5:19

III. How does God encourage us in this work?

A. God's general promise doesn't conflict with His sovereignty

1. Degeneration in children isn't always the direct result of parents
2. Yet when a child departs, let's not start to question God's promise

B. The promise to encourage us but also to plead upon: Gal. 6:4; Ps. 127:3-5

THE CHRISTIAN HOME IS THE SEMINARY OF THE CHURCH.

IF CHRIST LIVES IN YOUR HOME, YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD WILL SOON KNOW IT.

IF FAMILY RELIGION WERE DULY ATTENDED TO AND PROPERLY DISCHARGED, I THINK THE PREACHING OF THE WORD WOULD NOT BE THE COMMON INSTRUMENT OF CONVERSION. (R. BAXTER)

**A HOUSE WITHOUT FAMILY WORSHIP HAS NEITHER FOUNDATION NOR COVERING.
(J MASON)**