

RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION FOR THE CHURCH LIFE

Lesson Eight

Cooperating with God for His Move as Parents Entrusted With Their Children to Cultivate and Nurture Them in the Lord

Scripture Reading: Matt. 6:33; Eph. 6:4

- I. The fulfillment of God's economy requires our cooperation, and to cooperate with God means to be bound together with Christ and to have one living with Him by one life—John 14:19b; 6:57; Gal. 2:20:**
- A. God's heart is to carry out His economy; God's economy is not merely that we should be good, spiritual, holy, or victorious; He desires neither a good man nor a bad man but a God-man—Eph. 1:9-11; 1 John 3:2.
 - B. Instead of usurping God by praying for our prosperity, health, or family without any consideration of God's economy, we should pray, live, and be persons according to God's heart and for His economy—cf. 1 Sam. 4:3; Hag. 1:2-5; Rev. 4:11; Eph. 1:9-11.
 - C. All things necessary for our human existence need to be under a divine limitation; anything that exceeds our need becomes worldly, and it frustrates us from the economy of God's purpose; in everything God's economy must be the deciding factor—Matt. 24:38.
 - D. When God's economy is carried out among His people, they are blessed—1 Sam. 7:1-5:
 - 1. Our welfare, our well-being, is linked to the carrying out of God's economy, and we should not seek our well-being apart from God's economy—Matt. 6:33.
 - 2. We should not expect prosperity for ourselves; rather, we should expect that through us the Lord will do as much as possible to accomplish His economy.
- II. The church cannot go on if parents do not have a sense of being entrusted; God has committed a human body, along with his soul, into our hands; we do not want to see our children needing to be rescued back from the world—Gen. 48:9; Psa. 127:3; Isa. 8:18:**
- A. We are wrong if we do not take care of our children; please remember that it is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their children turn out the right way—Psa. 127:3.
 - B. When the children are young they are in your hands and can do nothing much themselves; if you are loose with yourself, you will also be loose with them; we must realize that parents must exercise self-control, sacrificing their own freedom—cf. John 17:19.
 - C. After the church preaches the gospel and saves men, it has to deal with all kinds of family problems associated with these men; but if parents are responsible for the proper nurturing of their children, and if the children are brought up in the church, the church will be relieved of half of its burdens—2 Tim. 3:15; 1:5.
- III. We should nurture the children in the discipline and admonition of the Lord; we should tell them what a proper Christian is by teaching them the discipline of the Lord—Eph. 6:4:**
- A. Parents must help their children to have proper aspirations; how we live affects the aspirations of our child; parents must learn to channel the ambitions of their children in the proper direction—2 Cor. 5:9.

- B. Many parents cultivate their children's pride and encourage them to go after vainglory by heaping praises upon them in front of other people; we do not need to hurt their self-esteem, but we must point out their pride to them—Prov. 16:18; Phil. 2:3; 1 Pet. 5:5.
- C. A Christian needs to know how to appreciate others; it is easy to be victorious, but it is hard to accept defeat; when our children are defeated, we need to teach them to accept their defeat with grace—Phil. 2:3-4.
- D. From their youth, we should give our children a chance to make their own choices; we should not make every choice for them until they reach the age of eighteen or twenty or else it will be impossible for them to make any decisions when they grow up—cf. Deut. 30:19; Jer. 21:8.
- E. As Christians, we have to train our children to manage their things properly; we must give them the opportunity to take care of their personal belongings, to manage their own shoes, socks, and other affairs; let them know how things should be handled from their youth—Prov. 22:6.

IV. The way a child grows up depends on the atmosphere in the family; they must receive nurturing love as they grow up and must experience love in the family—cf. 1 Thes. 2:7-8:

- A. Half of the work of the church can be done by good parents; however, this work falls upon our shoulders today because there are few good parents—cf. Psa. 127:3.
- B. A family must be filled with an atmosphere of love and tenderness; there must be genuine love—cf. 1 Thes. 2:7-8.
- C. Parents must learn to be friends to their children; never allow your children to distance themselves from you; never make yourself unapproachable; remember that friendship is built upon communication; it does not come by birth—Matt. 19:14.
- D. The most helpful thing to children is for their parents to spend time with them; the more time the parents spend with them, the better:
 1. Sometimes we need to have free talks with them about wide-ranging subjects.
 2. We should allow them to join in our daily activities, and we should join them in their activities.