

How to Raise a Heartache

"The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother."
(Prov 29:15)

If you want to raise your child to be a heartache then follow these rules:

1. Constantly criticize his symbols of authority. If any authority figure tries to restrain him, let your child know that you will be his automatic ally in his conflict with that symbol of authority. Every chance you get, throw in some critical remark about someone in authority so that your child's big ears will be able to soak it up.

While we need to teach our children that there is no authority that transcends the authority of God, we need to teach them that authority at all levels (including school personnel, baby sitters, Bible class teachers, church leaders, grandparents, etc.) must be respected to have an orderly society and to please God as Christians. While you, in your maturity may be able to distinguish between the man and the position of authority that he represents, very few children are able to make the distinction. Hence, criticism of a policeman's conduct becomes criticism of law in his mind. Criticism of a teacher is criticism of school discipline in his mind. Criticism of elders, preachers, or Bible class teachers is criticism of divine government in his mind. The person represents the principle to most children. It is sad that all some children hear about their school, their country, or the church is criticism of work done by the personnel of these institutions. How can we expect them to grow up to respect them?

2. Let society take the blame for his conduct. Let him know that he is being constantly victimized by others. Allow him to constantly console himself in the notion that he deserves a better shake in life than society has handed him. Always express your sympathy to him when he complains that "it is just not fair". Then he can grow up believing, really believing, that whatever happens to him and whatever he does is someone else's fault. He can then go through life blaming his wife for domestic problems, blaming the church for his spiritual problems, blaming the government for many of his failures, and blaming you for the rest of his woes — after all you brought him into this world.

No Christian has ever had an ideal society in which to live and rear children. This is a sinful world. It was sinful in the first century. Christians were told to "become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life..." (**Phil. 3:15-16**). It was not an impossible task then and it is not now. Parents who were Christians were told to "bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (**Eph. 6:4**) in a world filled with ungodliness. (**Eph. 4:17-5:14**). Our children must understand that they are going to have to live godly in spite of society and quit blaming their moral, ethical, or spiritual behavior (with its consequences) upon society.

3. Do not teach your child how to properly use his or her body. Mothers, do not teach your child the effect that nakedness, or near nakedness, has on the opposite sex, nor the seductive power of "body language" (see Prov. 6:24-25). Then, when they become of age they will learn the effect and use it to the fullest because you didn't teach them the dangers involved.

One is simply burying his head in the sand if he does not recognize that the sex drive is strong in young people after they reach maturity. One way to protect it so that it ultimately will be used properly in the marriage relationship is to protect the sense of modesty and shame. One cannot allow that sense of shame to be destroyed without weakening the restraints necessary to reserve the body for a husband or a wife. It disturbs me to see parents of teenagers actually encourage their children to publicly display their bodies in scanty attire (often setting the example for them) or else ignore and/or defend them in their actions.

Young people need some teaching by their parents as to how to keep from kindling the fire that might eventually burn them. Teach your child to "flee fornication", including the actions that lead to fornication when they are allowed to run to their full and natural course.

4. Let him know that you think happiness and success in life depends on outward circumstances. This has all kinds of potential for heartache.

We need to impress upon our children by precept and example that one's relationship to God is the only thing that can bring eternal happiness and success, and that one's station in this life has little to do with it. If one is right with God, he can learn contentment and happiness regardless of outward conditions (**Phil. 4:4-ff**).

If children constantly hear us equating success with some external condition (a good job, a good house, social acceptance, a vacation home) they will likely grow up believing it and reacting accordingly.

We must make a determined effort to teach WHATEVER (external) state one is in that he can be happy and content - but even then that happiness in this life is not our real goal, but eternal happiness with the Lord in the next life.

5. Wait until he is grown to teach him how to live righteously and godly. Let him do what "a Christian should not do" while is young and "not a member of the church" and then when he becomes of age try to put the brakes on his behavior. If anyone questions you about his conduct be sure to answer, "Now, he knows that when he obeys the gospel he can not do those things any more".

Don't be too surprised when he learns that lesson well and will not obey the gospel because he has learned to love his conduct that you have allowed him to practice "until he becomes a member".

May we ever pray to God for the wisdom to rear our children as we've should.

- by Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

"Evidence of Things Not Seen"

Picture her -- a young girl taken captive in a war -- an innocent victim in a dispute between powerful countries. Now, her freedom gone, she is obligated to perform slave duties in the house of the conquering army commander.

Who is this girl? She is a minor payer in a well-known Bible account that centers on her slave master. And, who is her master? Naaman is his name, and his story is found in 2 Kings 5. Naaman, as you recall, was a successful army captain -- but he was also a leper.

The lesson from this slave girl is found in verse 3 of the text. Without any hint of the hatred or bitterness that could have easily filled her heart, she suggests a positive cure for her master's affliction. "If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy."

From this minimal information we can classify the young girl as a person of great faith. Why? It is because of her one simple statement. The prophet she had reference to was Elisha. How did she know he could heal leprosy? Someone might suggest that she had seen him do it many times. No! In fact, he had never done it before! Jesus said, "many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian" (Lk. 4:27). She knew he could do because she had FAITH IN GOD!

Faith is the "evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). The Bible speaks of many things that we have not personally observed. Do you believe them anyway? There are many things that God has said, including eternal promises He has made to us. Do you trust Him? Are you confident that He has the power to do all things? Judgment and your eternal destiny will be determined by your reaction to things you have not seen.

How strong is your faith? Will you obey Him (Jas. 2:26)?

- by Greg Gwin