

Encourage Children To Be Spiritually Minded

"How can we encourage our youth to be spiritually-minded in this age of materialism and convenience?"

First, don't spoil them. Giving them everything they want, or nearly everything, or pushing things on them they haven't even asked for will create a materialistic mindset. Waiting on them hand and foot will make tyrants out of them.

Second, make them work. Teach them to do chores and generally help out around the house. Sometimes this means foregoing play time with friends. Make them get up and get going with the day (Prov. 26:14).

Third, and this is an overall point, children must have the truth instilled in their hearts from a very young age (Eph. 6:4). "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it" (Psa. 127:1). They need to be instructed in the pitfalls of materialism (1 Tim. 6:9, 10). Pointing to the wrecked lives of the "stars" in our culture will help to impress on them the emptiness of riches for the sake of riches.

Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, as parents we need to shun materialism and not shirk our duties in this age of convenience. Setting the right example for our children will put an indelible mark on their psyche that will stay with them the rest of their lives. If we are not doing right, we cannot expect them to do right.

We have an uphill task in raising our children. We must approach it humbly, with much prayer and patience. Others who have gone through it before can help us to avoid some of the bigger pitfalls and give wise counsel (Prov. 15:22). Let us have confidence we can do what the Lord requires of us and that our children will be good people.

- by Steven Deaton

"Shamefastness" and Dress

In the context of holiness, Paul instructs women to "...adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works" (1 Tim. 2:9-10).

We communicate many things about our selves through dress. It should not be surprising that the woman of a "wily" heart is dressed "with the attire of a harlot" (Proverbs 7:10). The disposition of heart not only finds expression in word but often it manifests its character in dress.

The ostentatious or showy spirit often finds an outlet through extravagant hair styles, expensive jewelry and costly raiment. Paul is warning women readers to guard against inappropriate dress.

How does he combat the problem? Fight fire with fire. An unbecoming spirit is behind inappropriate dress, so if we concentrate on having a right spirit when we dress, our adornment should be appropriate.

One characteristic of a holy and godly heart is "shamefastness". According to Vine, this "is that modesty which is 'fast' or rooted in the character." Like "bedfast" is describing one confined to bed, "shamefast" is modesty firmly imbedded in character. This godly heart understands the limits or boundaries of propriety and shrinks back from ever crossing the line instead of seeing how close one can come to the line.

Shamefastness is that character of heart that is concerned with how certain actions will affect others. We see this clearly when Jesus speaks of the "importunity" or "shameless persistence" (the opposite of shamefastness) of one who approaches the door of a friend at midnight. He is persistent in asking for bread, but shamelessly so. He does not care if his friend is in bed at midnight with his children or what the friend will have to do to accommodate his request. He has no shame regarding how his actions are affecting his friend (Luke 11:5-8).

Our dress has an effect upon others. "Shamefastness" factors this in and makes sure the dress for the occasion will be fitting within the limits of propriety, therefore not adversely affecting others.

Our purpose in assembling is to worship and honor God, not put on a show with the new fashions. Shamefastness does not keep women from new things, it keeps her within the limits of modest dress, that manifests sobriety. Her dress never distracts other worshippers from the lofty

purpose of honoring God by bringing undue attention to herself, or attracting the envious or even lustful gaze of the distracted.

Warm weather also tempts the ostentatious and showy spirit to show off more of the body rather than keep it modestly covered. Shamefastness will not allow an ostentatious spirit to take root and find expression in skimpy clothing. The woman with shamefastness considers how shorts exposing the thighs; halter tops, attracting eyes to the bare midriff; or swimsuits boldly revealing the female form will attract the wrong kind of response from men. So, she avoids such attire before the public's eye.

The woman wanting to dress becomingly as one who is manifesting godliness can do so in any society. Developing shamefastness will help tremendously in dressing for all occasions.

- by Jerry Fite

'Because I Said So!'

The simple question "Why?" can sometimes be the most exasperating question our children can ask. Having given them instructions, and hoping for prompt obedience, it is so frustrating at times to be required to give a reason why. How often have we all answered, "Because I said so"?

This response does not imply that we do not have a good reason for what we've told them to do. Sometimes this is our response because we do not feel an explanation is merited, or would not be understood if given. And, this is not to say that we should never state the reasoning behind our instructions to our children. As a general rule, we should. But still, at times, we expect them to be satisfied with a "Because I said so!"- and get busy doing what we requested.

Surely God, who is our heavenly Father, must also be exasperated by the incessant questioning of 'religious' folks today. So often they ask "Why?" to the clear, simple commands of Scripture.

- "Baptism is essential for salvation? Why?"
- "Vocal music (singing) in worship, and no musical instruments? Why?"
- "The church is not to be involved in providing social and recreational activities for its members? Why?"
- "The Lord's Supper every week on the first day? Why?"
- And on, and on, and on . . . "Why? Why? Why?"

Now we're not suggesting that God does not have reasons for His commands. Nor are we saying that the Bible does not deal with such reasons. There's a good bit of explanation for God's commands contained in the Word. But the point we're making here is that we ought to obey God, whether we understand His reasons or not. As obedient children we should do His will just because "He said so!"

- by Greg Gwin