

and 32,33; Job 21:17-20; Isaiah 14:20 and Jeremiah 32:18.) This works two ways. First, children learn good and bad attitudes and ways of thinking from infancy, and even before birth, according to recent scientific findings. As a parent, your attitudes, outlook on life, preferences, likes and dislikes, opinions of right and wrong (conscience) all have a direct bearing on the way the child grows up and lives and prepare the child, even in infancy, for the way the rest of his or her life will proceed. In other words, the child who is raised to see everything as working against him (or her) will always be looking for bad things to happen and often may completely miss seeing the opportunities life puts in his or her path. Thus, they bring much of their own “bad luck” on themselves by looking for it. On the other hand, someone with a firmly positive attitude is always looking for ways to turn even the mishaps of life into profitable learning experiences. This results in real progress and success for the person with the positive attitude.\*

Good and bad attitude habits tend to be carried on through several generations and the attendant “luck” also carries on from generation to generation. So simply from a psychological standpoint, a positive attitude usually converts into “good luck” while a negative attitude makes its own “bad luck”. It is a demonstrable fact that those who are basically self-centered and selfish are angry, frustrated, and view as bad, anything that goes against what their immediate desire demands. And this brings the negative attitudes demonstrated earlier with its own resulting “bad luck”. But even greater than the psychological aspect, of which our Creator God surely was fully aware from the beginning of human life, is God’s own pleasure with those who live to please and honor Him and His displeasure and even anger at those who choose to live for their own pleasures and despise or reject Him. He has expressed His anger and proclaimed disaster and woe upon those who live for their own pleasure and against His commandments to love one another, bear one another’s burdens, and reflect His glory and honor. Usually, He simply removes His hand of protection and allows Satan to destroy or at least severely punish those who turn their backs on His Divine will for their lives.

Finally, never, never, never speak unkind words about the other parent to or about the other parent to or in the presence of your child or children. The result is devastating to the child’s respect for both of you.

Hopefully you and your spouse will follow the caring and sharing

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN?

AT THIS point we could enter a lengthy discussion of why so many of our young people are confused, have no sense of moral values, and are involved in drug and sex orgies, murders, thefts, suicides, and the like. After all if they don’t get the sort of solid values instilled in their consciousness in early childhood, both by precept and example, how are they ever to learn to be good citizens and lead happy, balanced lives?

Since this book is about marriage, not child rearing, what is said here about child rearing is strictly on the basis of the new marriage and making it a delight instead of the disaster it could easily become.

One thing that marriage usually brings is children. This is true of second or later marriages as well as for first-time marriages. But when there are “my children”, “your children”, and “our children”, it requires a great deal more understanding and love on the part of both parents and also between the children. While heredity does play a part in the way the children tend to view life, most of their attitudes are picked up from the parents’ attitudes. If both husband and wife are dedicated first to the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ and secondly each to the other, their children will naturally receive training in being unselfish and giving and the home environment will contribute to giving them the kind of caring, kind and giving outlook on life that will tend to make them respectful and obedient. But children quickly pick up on attitudes we adults often think are hidden. If we try to appear unselfish while we really are very self-centered and greedy, the children will usually realize it and perceive us to be big phonies. And when that happens, they lose respect and admiration for us. This, then will generally cause a polarization or gravitation of the children toward one or the other parent and a gradual wedge is inserted into the marriage which may work toward a disaster not only for the immediate marriage, but also the children’s marriages in the future.

Second marriages in which there are already children from either the wife or the husband are especially difficult. Far too often, the step-parent is faced with overcoming resentment from the step child who sees the new parent as an intruder. If the natural parent does not start off with an emphasis on showing continued love for the child while demanding love and respect for the new parent and insist on the child obeying the new parent, a

kiss and show love to the child and fair but firm discipline on the other, that is another disaster is waiting to happen. I absolutely guarantee that if the new parent is not permitted to interact with the child freely in both caring love and discipline, resentment on both sides will fester until it grows into open hostility. The step parent's authority to give reasonable orders to the child **MUST** be fully backed up and enforced by the natural parent.

Make sure before you marry what the relationship between your child and the new parent is going to be. If your child and the intended spouse do not get along, the day will surely come when you will have to choose one or the other of them. Much better to wait on the Lord for the perfect mate. Second best is **NOT** good enough for a child of the King! — And you won't be satisfied knowing you have chosen second best for long, either!

If the man you are thinking of marrying cannot be trusted to be alone with your teenage daughter, whether because of his nature or hers, you are asking for heartache and grief if you go ahead and marry him. And please notice that I said the fault might be that of the sexy teenage daughter who has seen too much on TV or at the movies, or, heaven forbid, in your own conduct, in which case it will be a rare man indeed who could be 100 percent trusted! But, even though your daughter is a real siren, how will you feel if she succeeds in seducing your new husband?

Remember that **EVERYTHING** you say and do that your children can “pick up” on is a learning experience for them. If they see distrust for your new spouse in your actions and apparent attitudes, they will reflect the fact in their own actions and attitudes toward your new mate!

While there will be times when it is necessary to use corporal or other punishment to enforce your orders, it is better to use as much positive encouragement to teach obedience as possible. Reward your children for jobs well done, extra effort they have displayed in doing a task, and for being prompt to obey. But do take care that you don't go too far with the giving of rewards and come off as buying the child's obedience.

Always try to think of how you would act if you were the child and your parent acted as you are acting and said what you are saying in any situation of conflicting wills and opinions. Of course you will also want to take into consideration any differences in the way the child views matters and still try to see how the child sees your present position. Check your own motivation and what you

are trying to accomplish for the child by taking the position you are taking, and if you are right, assert your authority to enforce the rule or order you have given.

Pregnant mothers-to-be should remember that recent scientific findings indicate that the unborn baby may hear and translate attitudes of the parents, especially the mother, and be born with a predisposition to be happy and pleasant “good babies” or to be angry, frustrated “angry babies” because of the attitude they have perceived from “Mom” before their birth!

Much has been said about the importance of avoiding tobacco smoking and drug and alcohol abuse during pregnancy and the clearly evident injury to the unborn baby that occurs when such abuses have taken place. But it has only been in the last few years that evidence of the damage of prenatal attitude abuse has been studied and documented. Anyone who cares enough about the success of their marriage to be reading this book, should also be caring enough to watch for negative attitudes and avoid them with great care.

I cannot find any scripture in the context in which it was written, either in the Old or New Testaments to back the long-held doctrine of the innocence of infants or the so-called “age of accountability.” Only the indication that the blessings of God are on the offspring of godly parents and the curses of God are on the offspring of the ungodly! I will offer a \$50.00 reward to anyone who can show me even one scripture which, when used in its proper context, gives any scriptural basis for teaching an “age of accountability” or the innocence of all babies and small children!

On the contrary, the only verses I can find back modern psychological studies which show that parental attitudes carry to even the tiniest baby and are reflected in the baby's outlook on life, likes and dislikes, tastes and do/not do judgements from the earliest days. Just to demonstrate, observe how quickly a newborn learns what makes Mom and Dad come running and give attention in pleasant ways and what makes Mom and Dad do unpleasant things to him (or her).

**WE'VE ALL** seen people who seem to “have it all together”, whose marriage is a beauty to behold and whatever they attempt is always a success. Were they “just born that way” or did they work at it?

Probably a bit of both. God's Word says that “He visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation...and showing mercy unto thousands that love Him.” (See *Exodus 20:5 and 34:7; Leviticus 26:27 - 42; Numbers 14:18*)

attitudes that will result in your marriage being a delight, but, in the case all seems hopeless, before you think of divorce, think of the children. The children, too, pay an awful price in this sort of situation. The children want to love both parents as a natural course, but as they see one parent abuse the other, most develop a hatred and fear for the abusive parent. However, a few develop the opposite reaction and consider the abused parent as weak and inferior and the abusive one as a strong hero figure. But without fail there is emotional scarring that is often reflected in bad marriages and abusive situations when these children grow into adulthood. Psychologists and psychiatrists frequently are called upon to work with these children to try to free them from the nightmares and from emotional instability which they often develop. Long before you remarry and bring a step-parent into your child's life, the child will have had to face several battles. First, of course is release from the guilt feeling that somehow one or the other parent was so disappointed in him (or her) that they didn't want to stay around, or that they somehow drove away the missing parent. I am amazed at how often I hear or read psychologists and psychiatrists report this to be a real problem to the children of divorced parents. Other problems may include teasing at school by insensitive fellow students, child abuse by the step-parent you chose by mistake, loneliness or lonesomeness for the missing parent (sometimes to the point of running away to try to find the missing parent).

Lastly, remember the old saying, "As the twig is bent, so the tree is inclined."





