

Topic: Bringing Up the Children God Has Given Us

Judges 13:8

“Then Manoah entreated the Lord and said, O Lord, let the Man of God whom You sent come again to us and teach us what we shall do with the child that shall be born.”

As a father how many times have you heard the voice of God. Specifically giving you instructions about your children. When God speaks are we listening or are we often too busy to hear Him. The modern world we live clearly shows that something is wrong. The family that God intended for His children is rarely seen. We are raising children who are neglected, emotionally deprived and exposed to all form of dangers.

If you think we have created a better world for our children just listen to this story once told by Billy Graham. In a grisly road accident one female student was critically injured. As she was taking her last breath she said this words,” Mum, you taught me many things, how to hold a cocktail glass, how to protect myself when having sex, how to get pregnant. But mum, you forgot to teach me how to die and now am dying. is a better place.

Pause for a second and ask yourself, what have you taught your child? Yes they are the best swimmers, the best pianist, the best soccer players... In all these teaching where is God in their life. Have you taught them God’s way? Can they differentiate between right and wrong and can they choose the right thing even when you are not around.

The Manoa’s were promised a child. The wife was barren but God promised them a child who was going to be the deliverer of the Israelites. He was to be a special child. The first the Angel of the Lord appeared to the wife. He gave her the good news that they would have a child. He also instructed her how the child would be raised. Interestingly, Manoah was absent the first time the angel appeared. But when the wife told him the news, his heart was receptive. In fact, he went ahead and prayed begging God to sent the angel again to teach them how to bring up the boy.

Let me challenge every father with this question, how many time have you listened to your wife in regard to the issues of raising children. Imagine what would have happened if Manoa was quick to rubbish off the news from his wife.

The second time the angel appears, he still does so to the wife. The wife calls Manoa and they both receive the instructions on how to bring up the boy. They both did all that was required of them and they lived as instructed until the child was born and they raised him as was required and child was overpowered by holy spirit in childhood.

As children grow up, they have their own choices to make. The bible says in th book of Proverbs 22:6 *“Train a child in the way he should ho, and when he is old he will not turn from it”*.

Manoah and his family were very instrumental in raising Samson as they were instructed. But we all know the mistakes that Samson made. But one thing is evident, that the Manoah's did play their part in the upbringing of Samson. The lives of our children, the direction they will take depends on the direction us parents have taken, and the foundation we have laid in our families. Like Samson, they may fall away but eventually they regain their senses and come back to the faith they believed in.

It is in their childhood that a child will take instructions, the lesson of obedience and who Jesus is. It is in this stage that God's love will be taken in. But if this space is neglected, when child grows up it will be difficult for them to learn easily. It will take God's grace and intervention to help them at old age.

In His word God has given us the instructions on how to bring up our children. Deuteronomy 6:5-7 says

“And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with your entire being and with all your might.

And these words which I am commanding you this day shall be in your minds and hearts;

You shall whet and sharpen them so as to make them penetrate, and teach and impress them diligently upon the hearts of your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up.”

God intends that His words be in our hearts first just as Psalms 119:11 says: *I have hidden your word in my heart they I may not sin against you)*

If we have His word in our hearts, it will give us desire to teach it to our children. God has told us what to do. But when we see increased moral decadency in our families and society, as Father we have to ask ourselves the hard questions. Where have we gone wrong? Maybe we haven't heeded to God's word and haven't taught our children as is expected of us. We have left these children to the world but if we have trained them well then the devil is working and so let's pray for them earnestly such that God can help them live right.

On this Father's Day let us remember that there is a path we should follow in bringing up our children. We should ask for God Holy spirit to instruct us. Ask God to fill our children with the with the Holy Spirit. We should be ready to make the sacrifices that will help us to raise them well. It's up to us to help them live right. Father do not be afraid to correct mistakes our children are making.

Peace and joy in family will only come if we put God first. Yes, times have changed, but the word of God has not changed. The basis of a godly family has not. Children need their parents. They need guidance, support and encouragement. When parents make mistakes, or when they choose to be absent in search for more, more wealth, happiness or more success their children suffer.

May we teach our little ones the word of God so that they can hide in the heart. Let us be intentional and teach it to them diligently, following the guidance of God and the Holy spirit.

Like the teenage girl in Billy Graham story, let not be like the parents who know how to do everything else, but not how to live a godly life. God will one day questions every father, what did you with children I entrusted to you. What will be our answer? Will be among those who will say “Lord the economy was tough and I had to work two jobs to pay the bill so I never did much”. Will you have your own excuse. Let this Father’s Day sermon challenge you and like Manoa beg God again to help you bring up your child according to the instructions He has given us.

Conclusion

May God forgive us where we may have neglected our duties. Let us ask Him to help us correct the mistakes we have made. Above need to bring back the family worship in our homes. Time set apart to read God’s word, interact with your children and pray together. Yes, it is true that a family that prays together stays together. Amen