



Northside Proclaimer

Proclaiming The Word Of The Lord

1 Thessalonians 1:8

Northside Church Of Christ Welcomes You!

August 23, 2015

Rearing Unselfish Children

Sewell Hall

In the teacher's manual which accompanies her excellent course of study, *Born of a Woman*, Dene Ward has the following observation: "We have raised too many spoiled, self-centered young people who think that they are the only ones who matter in any family decision and who expect their parents to willingly give up everything for them with no thought of themselves, much less of the Lord and His people.... We have let our permissive, rights-oriented society determine our philosophy."

Recently, a ladies' Bible class, studying this material, addressed the question: "How can we rear children that are not selfish and self-centered?" The following thoughts were suggested:

First, example. Selfish parents cannot hope to rear unselfish children. However, parents whose idea of providing a good example is to give in constantly to their children's wishes or preferences will produce the very selfishness they want to avoid. Better to let children see parents being unselfish with one another and planning unselfishly to serve those in need outside the family. And the effect of such an example will be greatly increased when the unselfishness is practiced cheerfully and when it is seen to bring genuine happiness.

Unselfish people outside the family can also be useful examples. Point out such people to children and commend them. Children are imitators and they will imitate those they are led to admire.

Involve children in family decisions. Discuss an increase in contribution or a gift to some victim of disaster with them. Allow them to go along when parents are going to help someone in need. All of this enables them to feel that they are personally involved, and they begin to taste the satisfaction of unselfish service.

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church Of Christ

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Announcements

- Remember the shut in's.
- Pray for the church and one another.
- Remember the spiritual sick among us.
- Call or email me to add announcements, thanks.
- Volunteers needed for fair prep at Bryan's house tomorrow (Monday) at 2 PM. See Bryan if interested.

Chronological Bible Reading Plan

Aug 23 Jer 49-50
Aug 24 Jer 51-52
Aug 25 Lam 1:1-3:36
Aug 26 Lam 3:37-5:22
Aug 27 Ezek 1-4
Aug 28 Ezek 5-8
Aug 29 Ezek 9-12

Taken a step further, parents may help children to look for ways that they can actually help others personally. A toy given to children who have none, something helpful done for an aged or invalid person, even a card sent to someone who is sick can begin to form a pattern of unselfishness. It is better not to tell them what to do. Just help them see the need and let them determine their own response. Though it may not be what you would do, let them carry through on their own decision and then praise them for their generosity.

To learn the unselfish use of money, children need some money to use. They need to give something of their own, rather than something that has been given to them. The best way for them to have money is to earn it—the way it must be obtained throughout life. Once they have money, they can be taught to divide it up—some for the Lord, some for things they need, some for savings and some for pleasure.

At the same time, to be unselfish, children must learn that there are some things that they must do for which there is no pay: such as cleaning their own rooms or helping with the family dishes or mowing the family grass. Children who have not learned to share family responsibilities are poor candidates for successful marriage.

By all means, Christian parents must provide what public schools are not providing—Bible teaching regarding unselfishness. A group of children whom I recently taught knew many scriptures regarding heaven, the church, salvation, and other Bible subjects; but not one knew the words of Jesus demanding that disciples deny themselves and take up their crosses. Surely nothing in the teaching and example of Jesus is more emphasized than unselfishness. And nothing is more contrary to the accepted wisdom of our modern day. Public schools, the press, psychologists, counselors (both professional and non-professional), as a rule, are teaching selfishness—the right to do what you want, to set your own course in life without concern for others. Unless our children are taught otherwise, they will surely accept this philosophy.

Regardless, however, of our example, teaching, efforts to involve them, encouragement of initiative and positive reinforcement, children will still require some parental control if they are to avoid selfishness. They only learn unselfishness by giving in and allowing others to have their way. Accomplishing this may be awkward for unselfish parents, but there is a way. Fathers can require that children be unselfish with their mothers, and mothers can demand that children be unselfish with their fathers. Both can demand unselfishness among siblings and playmates. Selfishness will surface at times, but it must never be accepted.

Such teaching and control must be practiced when children are still teachable and controllable. We must not wait too long. Otherwise, we will wake up sooner than we expect to find ourselves with the kind of self-centered and selfish children so graphically described in Dene Ward's book and so tragically common in modern America.