



child to behave”—so children are not expected to obey and behave themselves. The result of this is that when parents don't expect a certain behavior, that behavior doesn't happen. Now certainly, all of us have seen cases of parents communicating to their children that they “aren't good

enough” no matter what they do. This can be just as destructive, and I am certainly not advocating this kind of cruel mistreatment of children. However, what we must do is look to Scripture in order to determine for ourselves the kind of behavior that God expects of His children and then exercise the loving yet forceful influence we should to help produce that behavior in our children. The Psalmist declares rightly, **“The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple”** (Psa. 119:130). The world will not follow the standard of Scripture, but we must follow it, and give our children the stable example, and guiding influence that will give them the strength to stand against the tide.



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ISSUE

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BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

November 11
2012



Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:20 AM
6:00 PM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Bill Davis
Steve Dixon
Jack Langley
Neil Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

Preserving the Conscience of the Young

By Kyle Pope

The nightly news is filled with tragic stories of young men and women who, while still at an early age in life, have committed horrible acts of brutality and cruelty. On a recent broadcast one expert observed that more and more, even after being convicted and sentenced for serious crimes, many of today's young people demonstrate no remorse or sense of shame when called to account for their actions. This is much as it was in Jeremiah's day. The Lord asked him, concerning the wicked of Judah, **“Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed, nor did they know how to blush”** (Jer. 8:12, NKJV).

Sadly, this tendency is not limited to the hardened criminals of our society but even among young people within the church throughout the brotherhood we see

lies told casually, immorality embraced, delight taken in intoxication, laws broken, authorities mocked, and rebellion admired. While it is true that the young of all periods of history have struggled with such things, I'm afraid that some things the young are forced to face in this age are much more threatening to



Olsen Park church of Christ

their eternal welfare than the issues the rebellious of previous generations ever imagined. Lifelong addictions can begin in childhood. Disrespect for the very things which can help them the most can become imbedded within young hearts. The failure to restrain attitudes and actions of the flesh can make it so difficult to turn back to spiritual values that many never do! Jesus warned aptly, **“whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea”** (Matt. 18:6).

There are certainly many factors which account for this—some that are within and some that are outside of our control. However, it seems to me that there are a few things that we can do while children are very young to help preserve a tender conscience within them.

1. Nurture within them an understanding of their accountability to God. Behaving a certain way because a child's parents demand it has its limitations. As soon as a child realizes that mom and dad can't always know what they do in secret, all of the instruction in the world may go out the window. The human soul must real-

ize that God watches over our actions at all times if we are to govern our own behavior as we should. The Hebrew writer warns us, **“there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account”** (Heb. 4:13, NKJV).

2. Don't treat rebellion lightly. When a little child looks in the face of his or her parents and defiantly tells them “no”, or deliberately disobeys a parent's clear instruction they are planting the microscopic seeds of rebellion that one day could produce the spirit that looks in the face of God and rejects His counsel. Certainly there will be times that children rebel. I'm not saying we should treat every incident of rebellion the same. However, we must not make it seem as if some rebellion is acceptable. We must let children know that it is a serious matter to reject the authority that God has placed over us whether it be parents, teachers, our elders, civil authorities, or Scripture itself. Paul taught, **“...there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the au-**

thority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves” (Rom. 13:1-2). If we ignore rebellion, we tell our children that sometimes it is acceptable to disobey **“the ordinance of God.”**

3. Don't let the world dictate what you will tolerate from your children. I'm not sure why it is but over the last few decades there has been a dramatic change in our expectations of the kind of behavior of which children are capable. The world tells us “you just can't expect a little