

## **How to Have A Family Altar**

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### **CHAPTER THIRTEEN**

#### **The Family Altar and Obedient Children (Concluded)**

IN OUR LAST CHAPTER we looked at what kind of persons the parents must be if they are to rear obedient and disciplined children. In this chapter we shall look at what the parent must do if he is to rear his children in obedience.

1. The parent is obligated by GOD's Word to teach his child

- (a) how to be saved and to lead him into the experience of salvation as soon as possible;
- (b) how to be filled with the HOLY SPIRIT and to lead him into this experience as soon as possible after he is saved;
- (c) how to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord JESUS CHRIST and to direct the growth of the child into the likeness of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

The springs of a child's spiritual obedience are rooted in these three basic spiritual experiences - salvation, filling, and growth. And the spiritual obedience of the child will never go any deeper than his roots in these three basic experiences.

Those who put on obedience from the outside because of fear have great harm done to their personalities. Children who give this forced obedience may develop mental twists and personality tensions. Also, children so reared are the ones who usually "kick over the traces" once they are away from their parents' directing hands. Nothing is more clearly and certainly known than that spiritual obedience must have spiritual roots.

2. The parents must hold regular spiritual conferences or fellowship with the children

Mrs. Wesley was the busy wife of a faithful pastor besides having the care and direction of a large family. Yet, Mrs. Wesley, besides having a daily family altar, spent one hour each week with each one of her children individually in what she called "spiritual examination." She was able to show the love of CHRIST and to make a personal application of spiritual truths in the light of that child's particular needs.

Through such periods of intensive breaking up of fallow ground, the obedient spirit and attitude was laid deep in the souls of the children.

The reason there are so many worldly, shallow, disobedient boys and girls in so-called Christian homes is because the parents are too lax to pay the price for godly, obedient, disciplined boys and girls. A hurried and simple "GOD bless Johnny" at the end of the day and a minute prayer of grace at the dinner table is fine to show everybody we're not quite fully paganized; but it

definitely is not enough to rear obedient children with the foundations of GOD's Word deep in the souls! Not one child in a thousand gets the kind of training Mrs. Wesley gave her children, yet the need is a thousand times greater today than it was then. Oh! the soul-murdering negligence that so-called Christian parents will have to answer for at the judgment bar of GOD!

The spirit of the apostle Paul toward his Thessalonian believers should be the spirit of every parent toward his children. **"So being affectionately desirous for you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of GOD only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us"** (I Thessalonians 2:8). At the family altar you willingly impart the gospel and the Word of GOD to your children.

There are some, however, who are not willing to stop here; because they are affectionately desirous of the spiritual welfare of their children, they must impart their very souls in loving, sympathetic counsel. Father, how long since you slipped into your boy's room and talked with him about his problems, his experiences at school, his troubles, his quarrels?

Your sharing your love with him and his sharing his experiences with you will help the child in understanding his own life and will enable you to direct his spiritual growth and unfold the Word of GOD to him in terms of his own everyday experiences. Urge him to express his feelings, whether they are good or bad.

Children oftentimes have feelings of fear, hostility, resentment, or hatred which have been stirred up during the day, at home or in school. Wise is the parent who will permit the child to express these feelings and get them out of his system. If the feelings are left inside they will cause the child all kinds of trouble - pouting, delinquency, disobedience, lack of interest in school work, and extreme nervousness. But - and here is the key - the child must feel free to tell how he feels. He must be assured that he will be understood, that he will be loved even though he does have mean feelings. Oftentimes this is all that is necessary to cause Johnny to feel sorry and repentant that he ever felt so mean.

It won't be an uncommon experience to have Johnny say (after he's got it all out of his system), "I'm sorry, Dad."

Open confession encouraged in the lives of growing children will assure their lives being open to healthy growth, free from personality-destroying hates. James 5:16 applied and understood in the light of Ephesians 6:4 and I Thessalonians 2:11 would assure a happy, healthy, consecrated future for your child. (Ephesians 6:4: **"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."** I Thessalonians 2:11: **"As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children."**)

What if your child pours out all this meanness to you and still shows no change of spirit to sorrow or love?

The answer is found in James 5:16 and in I Thessalonians 2:11. Notice James 5:16: **"And pray one for another."** First ask your boy to pray for you. If he honestly thinks you or someone else has done him wrong, ask him to pray for you or for that person. Then you pray for him, in love.

Then after prayers, ask GOD to give you a few words, maybe a little story, something that will touch the heart and minister to your child's need.

Look at I Thessalonians 2:11. The word comforted is placed between exhorted and charged! Why? The exhorting and charging was permeated with the spirit of comfort - the spirit of love. According to James 5:16, the healing comes after the confession and the prayer.

Yes, confessing our faults in an atmosphere of love, prayer, and understanding brings GOD's healing to us! Begin these spiritual conferences or fellowships with your children now on a regular, prayerful, and consistent basis. If your boy or girl is unruly, disobedient, and difficult to get along with, it would be a good idea for you to begin now to apply as far as you can the principles set forth here. If you sincerely and humbly do your part you will see a marked change!

3. Parents must genuinely love their children.

There must be real fellowship between parents and children if parents are to win their confidence and trust.

Paul's words of wisdom to young Timothy concerning the care of souls reveals a trustworthy blueprint of the spirit and attitude which should characterize every parent at all times in his various relationships with the children. In II Timothy 2:24-26, Paul advises Timothy: "**The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient. In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if GOD peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.**"

Many children look upon their parents as rulers; all too few look upon their parents as their real and dearest friends. This spirit of real friendship cannot be created when the child is sixteen years old and perhaps in serious trouble! No, this fellowship must be established in the earliest years.

If the parents really show love toward him and he disobeys (he probably won't), then the parents have his conscience on their side and deep inside him he will feel a sense of guilt! Delinquent, disobedient children are nearly always unloved children. In Ephesians 6:4 GOD warns fathers not to provoke their children to anger but to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

4. Parents must be considerate.

It is quite inconsiderate for a mother to call Johnny home when he is coming to bat in the ninth inning with all the bases loaded. Every child should have periods of play which he can regard as his own and into which there will be no interruption from the parents.

Johnny will be more apt to respect his mother's authority if his mother respects Johnny's rights. Parents should precede an order with "please" and follow it with "thank you." No authority is worthy to be obeyed if it isn't courteous and respectful.

A child is slow to forget being falsely accused. If you have made that mistake, then undo some of its terrible effect by going to that child and humbly apologizing. At least this will remove resentment and restore respect.

Sometimes a child is accused of disobedience when the truth is that he didn't understand what was expected of him. Always make your orders clear and then be patient toward the children. If you knew definitely that your little child was the CHRIST Child and that the Father in Heaven was deeply concerned about him, you would not find it difficult to be ever considerate and respectful. JESUS said "**Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me**" (Matthew 18:5).

#### 5. Orders must be wisely given.

When a parent gives an order It should be obeyed. Of course if the child really knows a reason which would cancel that order, he should be allowed to state his reason. But a respectful stating of his reason and arguing with his parents are two entirely different things.

If the child is permitted to argue and fight, authority is destroyed and the home will become a bedlam of clashing wills. Sometimes after his mother has given a command, Johnny will plead until his mother in despair lets him have his way. When she has once been defeated by Johnny's wheedlings, you may be sure her authority has been destroyed and Johnny will capitalize upon it until obedience is only a dream of what it might have been. His mother should teach him that this kind of conduct carries with it a punishment.

Orders must not be issued by the whim of the parent at the moment. Some parents feel bad in the morning and they give their orders accordingly; then in the afternoon when they feel better they change their orders.

Parents must make clear, fair and Scriptural decisions and then abide by them. Parents may break down their authority by spreading it too far. The parents who make an issue of everything soon end up with no clear sense of authority in anything.

Many things can be overlooked and hence no command is given. But when you do make a command, have it cover an important issue and then see that the command is definitely obeyed and never permit an exception in this.

#### 6. When commands are knowingly and willfully disobeyed, the child must be punished (Proverbs 23:13).

If his rebellious will is not directed into paths of obedience when it is tender, it will go on from strength to strength to defy men, country, and GOD! The child who is not taught to yield to his parents will likely never yield to GOD.

The child's will must be early subdued and then the child will be in line to submit to GOD in salvation.

Spanking is not the only form of punishment. A form of punishment almost equally effective is the depriving them of things they want or want to do. Depriving youngsters of the thing they want (never of food or the necessities of life) or like to do is one of the very best sanctions for obedience.

Another form of punishment quite successfully used by some parents is to send the disobedient child to bed for rest. Mrs. Wesley says that the child must begin to learn obedience at about the age of six months.

~ end of chapter 13 ~

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