



Berean Christian Fellowship

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Fear, the Beginning of Wisdom—Part 5

“Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

Civil liberty and societal peace can not be manufactured in a factory, nor are they commodities we can buy online. They are instead nurtured and grown in people in every generation, taking an entire generation to foster.

This is because civil liberty requires morality to exist, which in turn exists only because of personal restraint and self-control. Morality has to be nurtured in every generation, because it comes from the character of the people. Just as a farmer’s security depends on how fruitful his crop came in, the morality of a society depends on how well character was nurtured in its children now inheriting the nation.

For this reason, uncaring, apathetic, and insouciant upbringing of children is dangerous to society. It is said that the Cherokee Nation considered the effect of each decision they made upon the seventh generation of their children. What parent today thinks this way? In sharp contrast, we live in an age where the next generation is the last thing on our minds. Rather than spend time developing their character, we distract them with TV, movies, and video games so we can fulfill our own interests undistracted and unbothered by their questions and demands. Rather than hold the line against unpleasant tantrums and disobedience, we seek to make “peace” by placating, appeasing, and humoring children. The results are never “peace,” but shame. *“The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother”* (Prov. 29:15).

As children grow into their autonomy, they express the worst side of the sin nature, possessed by extreme self-interest and callousness for their actions. We just don’t think of it as harmful, because they lack the power or knowledge to cause any serious harm. The danger is to placate these expressions of the

very worst behavior imaginable—self-interest, pride, arrogance, lust—not foreseeing how they will manifest when the child can no longer be restrained by us and can act directly on the world. Correcting it early will help prevent terrible results later (like murder) and drastic consequences (death penalty). And this is what the Proverb is getting at: *“Do not hold back discipline from the child, Although you strike him with the rod, he will not die”* (Pro. 23:13). Many parents do not give thought to the future and how our “giving way” in their most formative years will rob our society of its moral strength in the years to come.

“The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person” (Ecc. 12:13). *“The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way”* (Pro. 8:13a). Instilling the fear of the Lord through teaching, being a role-model of what you teach, and constructive, corrective discipline is essential to producing self-control and personal restraint, which will result in practical morality and virtue in our culture, which leads to personal and civil liberty and societal peace. And while the indwelling Holy Spirit is where the power of self-control, good works, and service comes from, even the non-believer benefits from this instruction in their youth.

Scripture speaks a great deal about the personal and societal value of fearing God: *“The fear of the Lord leads to life, So that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil”* (Pro. 19:23). *“The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, That one may avoid the snares of death”* (Pro. 14:27) - in a very practical way, as well as spiritually. *“The fear of the Lord is the instruction for wisdom, and before honor comes humility”* (Pro. 14:33). *“The reward of humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honor and life”* (Pro. 22:4).

These are very practical side-effects to the Fear of the Lord, but of course peace with God, salvation, and eternal life are chief. May we instill it in our children. Even so, Amen.