

Transferring supervision for our children from us to God

By B. D. Tate

This is the most important responsibility we have as parents. This is not something that takes place overnight, but it does begin very early and continues until they eventually leave home. It is deeply involved with our relationship to our children. In a very real sense, we represent God to our little ones. What they think of mom and dad will go a long way toward how they perceive God. Therefore it is very important to develop the right relationship with our children from the start.

The Scriptures are filled with instructions about relationships. Proverbs is a gold mine for those who want to know what God thinks concerning relating to others. Parents would do well to read Proverbs daily taking at least one verse for the day to meditate upon. Proverbs is written by Solomon, for which the Bible says God gave wisdom to beyond all others before him or to come after him. This wisdom is available to all ages but it does require our attention in reading it. As parents it would be wise to instruct our adolescents to read Proverbs--a chapter a day; something will penetrate their hearts and minds, I guarantee it. Sometimes, our own teenagers will see a current event, a personal situation, or everyday relationship, and comment about a verse from Proverbs pertaining to it. I really can't overstate the case for making our kids read the Word of God for him/her self.

Some might say, it would be wrong for parents to force our religion upon our children. Nothing could be further from the truth. If training our children in the ways of God and teaching them about Jesus Christ, is forcing religion upon them, then so be it. No one can learn, understand, interpret, or discern, in a vacuum. God instructs parents to teach their children, which also includes youth, to follow the ways of the Lord (Duet. 6:7; Prov. 22:6).

All the days of our lives we are given information with interpretations. Values are caught by the transference of significance attached to information. The inclusion of meaning is what stimulates receptivity in our hearts and minds. We are not a machine or computer that just accumulates data to be spewed back when our buttons are pushed.

Human beings require meaning with anything they learn. How many times have we heard “*Why should I learn algebra, chemistry, or geography, I’m never going to use it.*” For students who make comments like this, the information was not accompanied with enough significance or meaning for them.

As parents, **it is our job to apply meaning to our children’s** lives. This meaning also includes the developing of their self esteem. **One of the most important meanings that must get passed onto them, is that God created them. God owns them. God loves them, and God has purpose for the lives.** For many years they look to us for their fulfillment and meaning. We praise them, we love them, we train them, we invest in them, we spend time with them, and all of this instills value in them. There will come a time when parental approval, parental involvement, or parental love, will not be enough. They may seek to supplement this approval with their peers, in a career, in money, power, pleasures, or fame; but the outcome is that they need to seek their value in God.

Parents, it is our most important job to transfer their attachment from us to the Lord. In fact, it is paramount.

**As one father said, “I always taught my son what was right and wrong but I never taught him that it was God’s right and wrong.” His son grew up thinking that his father had set the rules and now he could set his own rules. He never understood that right and wrong are absolutes found in the absolute ruler of the universe--God.*

**Another parent lamented, “I was always there for her, telling her what was right and wrong, being her conscience for her.” She grew up never growing aware or strong in the convictions of her own conscience. Her own conscience was immature. Now she was on her own, behind, vulnerable, and unable to distinguish God’s promptings to guide her. She had always suppressed her own sense of right and wrong and now that mom was not around, her own sense of guidance was too weak.*

Kids like this often will only do right in the presence of their parents, but when left to themselves they do whatever they want. God’s guidance system is our conscience, it must be developed, it must be exercised, and it

must be trained.

How then is God's supervision transferred to our children?

2

1) **Exposure:** Children are open while they are young. This openness is the time to train, inform, and bring significant meaning to their life through God's word. I like the illustration that Dr. Dobson uses. He said children are like baby ducklings which upon hatching from their eggs will attach themselves to the first thing they see move. By instinct, after this takes place, they will follow that attachment readily. God commands parents to instruct children to be attached to Him.

2) **Example:** Children will catch as much from us as they will get from our instructions. The absence of parental involvement in religious instruction is disastrous. They see mom or dad not praying, not reading, not talking about God and they get the real message. At the same time, what is it that we do read, what we do watch, and what we really rely on? Remember the old cliché "*What you do, speaks so loud / can't hear what you say.*" If our lives are attached to the Lord, **if we are completely transferred to Him**, they will see it and catch it.

3) **Extension:** We are an extension to God for them, at least at first. This is like one of our kids being on the extension phone line. We pick up the phone and it is grandma, we tell the kids to get on the other line so that they can listen in on the conversation; however, it's more than that. They too enter in, contribute, and converse with us. We share our relationships with our relatives with them. We also share our relationship with God with them.

Now, if our own relationship with God is very weak it becomes difficult to share **it**. Developing a stronger relationship with God is vital for our own well being and our children's too. We allow them to see how we talk to God, let them hear us pray, let them hear our own struggles, insights, discouragements, and faith affirmations. Let them share their thoughts on these matters with us and God. Make it a three way conversation where we are going to God ourselves and taking them with us--Extending the relationship on the other line so to speak.

4) **Educate:** Our faith is not stagnate. One of the most intriguing aspects of the Scriptures is that they are dynamic. The passages of Scripture are eternal, vibrant, on going, multileveled, speaking to the now, the then, and the future. The Scriptures are packed. There may be only one interpretation of a verse in context, but there are endless applications, insights, and meanings. This is what we would expect from an author who is eternal, all knowing, everywhere present, and all powerful. Educating ourselves in the Word and in turn our children means they have ammunition to fight against the onslaught of humanism, atheism, secularism, careerism, materialism, etc. This education is foundational to their being able to make sense of the world. There are no plans, no counsels, no wisdom that can succeed against the Lord's (Prov. 21:30).

This education is spiritual. It also has to do with applying God's witness within us to the word of God. Teach them to educate themselves from the Word of God. Transfer to them the longing and the need to go to the Bible daily. Teach them to get strength, understanding, counsel, wisdom, and guidance for all their plans from it. God's word is the authority in all matters of education; it is the truth, it is the way, and it is the life. There is no knowledge, no science, and no philosophy that is superior to God's Word. Scientists, philosophers, doctors, lawyers, politicians, kings, soldiers, (and the list goes on), throughout the ages have depended upon the revelations found in Scripture. For many of them, it was their faith that focused their thoughts in the right direction. We need to educate our children to do the same.

5) **Exchange:** Our children must exchange our leadership in their lives to God's leadership. We need to develop their conscience to know right and wrong which comes through connecting them with God's Spirit. God is the creator of all things and is therefore our owner. God is the source of all that is good and teaches us what is right and wrong. Matters aren't right or wrong because we say so; it is because God says so. We know this through the written Word of God--the Bible.

Guilt is the most common experience of human beings. Guilt can be suppressed, ignored, covered over, and when that happens they loose touch with God's avenue of communication with them. Guilt affects our conscience because for the most part we are guilty. Guilty of disobedience, guilty of violating the laws of love, being selfish, being self willed and so on.

One of the first things we experience when we come to God is forgiveness, and with forgiveness comes a sense of relief from guilt.

One of the greatest blessings of being a Christian is being freed from guilt. This freedom comes not by suppressing, ignoring, or covering it over, but by facing it. We come to the Lord and ask God's forgiveness in Jesus' name. This whole area of human experience with guilt in our conscience is God's way of communicating to us. Is our conscience clean? Is our conscience pricked by a sense of wrong doing? Is our conscience sensing a "red" light telling us not to do something? Is our conscience sensing a "green" light of peace that all is well? God speaks to us through our conscience. It is the spiritual aspect of our being that makes us aware of God's presence. Our **conscience inherently knows there is a God and knows that God is Holy.**

Our conscience knows when an action is in keeping with God's nature or not. By way of practice, obeying our conscience, we know it is a true guide for us. Paul the apostle said in Romans 9:1 *"I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit."* This witness in our children must be encouraged and exchanged from us as parents, to God as their heavenly parent. This is done by allowing our children the time and space in situations as they grow older, for their own conscience to work. It may mean that we allow them to be wrong for a period of time trusting that they will come to the right conclusions if left alone. Trusting them, trusting God, trusting that the exchange will take place, and it will, if we by faith in God, take the time to stay out of the way--when it is appropriate.

Parenting is not easy, especially today when the restraints in our society have been removed. (Restraints preventing such things as pornography, immorality, drug use, excessive entertainment and sports, and the many voices that claim to be the truth.) My prayer is that you will all cling to the Word of God and train your children to do the same. As things continue in the world towards evil, may we all be steadfast in our faith knowing the one who is able to keep us will do so until the end.

I invite your response to these thoughts, or questions on anything I may have not made clear. I hope there is something for you contained in this message, God bless you and your family.