

## Instructions Not Included?

Joe Slater

On a billboard along the highway, a baby peeked out from under a blanket. The caption read: ***Instructions not included . . .***

It's true that babies don't come with instructions printed on the package! New parents' classes may produce expert diaper changers, bath givers, and bottle warmer-uppers. But what about the really important things? Fortunately, the God who blesses us with children has not left us to wonder how we are to raise them! In His word, the Bible, God has given us much-needed guidance in child-rearing. Observe a few points:

**Love them.** One of the good things older women are to teach younger women is to *"love their children"* (Titus 2:4). Diapers, baths, and bottles comprise part of that picture, but certainly not all of it. Biblical love seeks the best interest of its object. In every decision, loving parents ask: "What is in the best interest, spiritually and/or physically, of my children?"

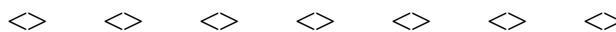
**Nourish them.** As a balanced diet enhances physical health, so proper spiritual nourishment strengthens the soul. Paul commands fathers to bring up (literally nourish) children *"in the training and admonition of the Lord"* (Ephesians 6:4). "Training" and "admonition" cover both positive instruction and correction, both in word and in act.

**Chasten them.** Really, this is a combination of the first two points. Wise King Solomon wrote: *"He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly"* (Proverbs 13:24). Despite the howls of protest from Humanistic social engineers, a good, sound spanking is **not** child abuse! Speaking of

God as a father, Hebrews 12:6 declares, *"For whom the Lord loves He chastens."* Again it was Solomon who wrote: *"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it far from him"* (Proverbs 22:15). Yes, severe correction is sometimes necessary; a truly loving parent will administer it appropriately.

**Lead them.** Both elders and deacons demonstrate leadership ability by "ruling" their own children (1 Timothy 3:5, 12). Far from sitting on a golden throne barking orders, a man who rules his children is out in front leading the way, setting the example, and encouraging the children to follow. This involves love, instruction, correction, and (occasionally) chastening.

God's word is our instruction manual for every aspect of life, including raising children. Let us follow it faithfully!



## The Truth

- \* KNOW IT (John 8:32)
- \* LOVE IT (2 Thess. 2:10)
- \* BELIEVE IT (2 Thess. 2:12)
- \* OBEY IT (1 Pet. 1:22)
- \* TELL IT (Eph. 4:15)
- \* WORK ON BEHALF OF IT (3 John 8)

Via Bulletin Gold

## Guard Your Steps

*"Guard your steps as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil"* (Eccl 5:1 NASU).

Many Biblical passages warn us to be careful in the paths we choose to walk. There are many Satanic-placed traps. Yet Solomon is warning that each guard his steps "when you go to the house of God." When we come to worship we'd better give careful consideration and make sure we know what we are doing. When dealing with worship we need to do the following:

First, we come to listen. Worship is our opportunity to listen to the voice of God. Thus we need to "keep silent before Him" (Hab. 2:20). James reminds us that we need to be "quick to hear and slow to speak" in regard to God's word (Jas. 1:19). It is a fact that the one talking is not the one learning.

Second, we must be aware lest we offer the sacrifice of fools. What are these kind of sacrifices? (a) When we make promises we do not keep. Solomon is warning about making hasty vows that were not well thought out. We ask God to do things all the time in the songs we sing and the prayers we pray. Have we really thought about the words of those songs and prayers? (b) When we say things we do not mean or are not true. When God challenges our words we don't want to say "they were a mistake" (v. 6). So, when we sing "Have Thine own way, Lord," are we truly living like we belong to Him? (c) When we do not offer to God what He has asked. Jesus warned "In vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:8, 9). He is a fool who believes he can offer to God anything. God isn't happy with anything. He only accepts that worship which meets His divine standards (Jn. 4:24).

How many of us "guard our steps" when we come to worship? Do we get to bed early so we'll be well rested? Do we prepare our minds through the morning as we're getting ready? Do we clear our minds of the various distractions that frequently hinder our worship?

Let us be careful. We do not want to offer to our God the sacrifice of fools.

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