

Do Not Sin Against The Child

Joe Slater

When I was seventeen, I would have resented being called a child! Think, however, of Joseph as his envious brothers plotted to kill him. I doubt he would have minded had he heard his brother Reuben admonish the others, “*Do not sin against the child*” (Genesis 44:22, KJV). To his credit, Reuben had planned to release Joseph from the pit into which they cast him (37:22).

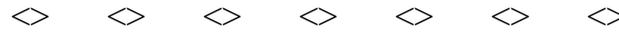
To the extent of his ability, Reuben safeguarded Joseph’s physical well-being. Similarly, most folks fulfill their responsibility to feed, clothe, shelter, and physically protect their children. While this is good as far as it goes, Reuben’s words still haunt us: “Do not sin against the child.”

If we value our children’s physical well-being, how much more should their spiritual welfare concern us? If harming them physically is sinful, and it certainly is, how much more earnestly should we heed Reuben’s warning when it comes to spiritual matters? “Do not sin against the child!”

Paul charged parents, specifically fathers, to bring up their children “*in the training and admonition of the Lord*” (Ephesians 6:4). Just as we train our children to walk, talk, make their beds, and complete their school assignments, so we must teach them to walk with God, talk to God, serve other people, study their Bibles, and assemble with the local congregation regularly. Such training certainly includes, but cannot be limited to, setting the right example. If parents seldom or never read the Bible, how likely is it that their children will take Bible study seriously? Parents who attend the assembly only sporadically will probably raise children who do the same or less. Ditto for Bible classes.

Jesus said, “*And whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea*” (Mark 9:42). Do you want to face Him in judgment knowing that your poor example or neglect of training resulted in your children or grandchildren being lost?

Despite our best efforts, our children sometimes go astray. But may it never be that our children stray from God because we didn’t train them or set the right example before them. “Do not sin against the child!”



Does God Find Our Success Literature Amusing?

What an amazing and fearful thought: God never fails! Be it the salvation of the sinner or the judgment of the wicked, his purpose always comes to pass. Man attempts, never knowing if his efforts will succeed or not, Ecclesiastes 11.6. God works, always sure of the outcome. He must find our success literature amusing.

- “How to Succeed in Life”
- “The 9 Steps to Financial Freedom”
- “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People”
- “Laws of Success”

These are all real titles. Many success books have good things to say. I’ve benefited from not a few of them. But they are all witnesses to human floundering in life’s great adventure, even in the very pursuit of success.

God speaks and the thing is done. There is no lag, no doubt, no disconnect, between decision and production. The sure single step to spiritual success is to hook our lives to his star.

Modern man has gone from wisdom literature (in the widest sense of the phrase) of the Bible to success books by people who purport to have made it. God tells us how to succeed in what is most important. He makes it possible for us to succeed. God is success.

“My word that comes from My mouth will not return to Me empty, but it will accomplish what I please and will prosper in what I send it to do.” (Isa 55.11 HCSB)

--Randal Matheny (Brazil) via fellowshiproom.org

Genericided Christianity

By becoming too well-known, a product can lose its distinctiveness. The Trademark Association calls this problem “genericide.” (Think of “generic” brands.)

Marlin Connelly gives some examples:

- All facial tissue is called “Kleenex.”
- Any gelatin dessert is “Jello.”
- Any clear, sticky tape is “Scotch Tape.”
- Any carbonated drink is a “Coke.”
- Any adhesive bandage is a “Band-Aid.”

This has happened to the words “Christian” and “Christianity.” Once a brand name for a definite product, it is now used by the world for any kind of vague religiosity connected loosely with the historical Christ. Doctrines that, in Bible times, were black and white, are now gray and faded. Practices that were then commanded are now optional. The rigid New Testament ethical code is now fluid and accommodating.

Churches of Christ are calling all those who claim the name of Christ back to the Bible. Let’s be of “one mind,” “one judgment,” and have “no divisions” among us (I Corinthians 1:10). Let’s all preach “one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all” (Ephesians 4:4-6). Let’s unite upon the solid truth of Scripture (I Corinthians 3:10, 11). Let’s put away the doctrines and commandments of men (Mark 7:7-9). Let’s teach God’s plan of salvation, offer worship heavenward that reflects God’s desires rather than man’s entertainment preferences, and have lifestyles that reflect God’s holiness (e.g., Acts 8:35-40; John 4:24; I Peter 1:16). In short, let’s all be “One” (John 17:21).

Don’t lose your trademark!

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people...” (I Peter 2:9).

--Charles Broyles (via Bulletin Gold)