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For the Love of the Family Ministries ™

Missionaries to America's Forgotten Mission Field, the Family
What To Do Now That I Have Failed
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These messages may be copied in their entirety to help Christians in the rearing of their children for God, strengthening their family, and their marriage. They are not to be changed in any manner or to be sold. This header must be on any copy. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the author.

What to Do Now That I Have Failed?

The goal of every Christian parent in life should not to be to rear a "good kid" or have students who are excelling academically, are great athletes, and so forth. The goal is to equip our children, these young saints "for the work of the ministry" (Ephesians 4:12, Mark 10:45). Our goal as Christian parents is to train them to stay on the road of usefulness to God, Proverbs 22:6. If, in the end, they are unusable to Christ, they are not handling life spiritually and wisely, both they and we have failed.

Proverbs 15:31-33, 16:5,18,25 "The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise. He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.

The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honor is humility. Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished. Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Why are so many children from Christian homes growing up to not be useful to the Savior? I think we have shown the reasons in this series. Nominal Christians rear their children to be nominal Christians or worse. Most of the time it is worse. One of the lies that we have been fed today by the liberal crowd, which is a lie of the devil, is that God is interested in a sloppy, mushy type of love that just loves everything. Nothing is right or nothing is wrong, it is all gray area. We condone a rebellious attitude from our children and even folks in our churches because God says to love them. Love and rebellion are opposites. Folks, discipline is a strong form of love.

Many parents because of not wanting to lose their children have compromised with their children's rebellion, sinful attitude, and life style. Therefore, whether the parent realizes it or not they have lost their children anyway and do not even know it. They do this on the basis of love. Satan does a good job here, a deceptive job.

Some parents have just lived up to the teaching they have had and most of the time that teaching is very poor. They have been told that discipline is important, yet when they get in a tight spot, they do not act upon what the Word of God says, but they act on how they feel. Emotions and feelings will lie to you. I have told my daughters that if they marry a man who is lead by his feelings and emotions he will lead them into sin every time. Your child will test you here. Most generally they will do what you let them do.

Let me give you an example here. You have a conviction against rock music from God's Word. You know Biblically it is wrong and rock music is anti-God. Rock music is worldly, sexually suggestive, appeals to the flesh and has ungodly words. The beat of rock music is designed to arouse emotions and other desires. Your daughter or son comes in and says, Billy is having a party or get together and he or she wants to go. Many times this is with, quote, Christian young people. Your child begs you to go. Your conviction is against that and you know better, but you give in to your emotions and feelings and let the child go "just this once." You have sinned against your conscience and what is right. YOU HAVE COMPROMISED!!

What about attendance in the house of God? Hebrews 10:25 tells us "not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together." I believe the Bible not only teaches God's people are to be faithful to the house of God, but God commands his people to be faithful. Our children watch us in this area. Sunday comes up and we are visiting Harry, Billy, the car show, ball game, boat show or something else. Parents you have just planted a seed in that child that it is okay to be led by your feelings rather than by what God says. I did not say not to visit Uncle Harry, but you need to do that when you are not missing the house of God. If you are going on vacation, find a good church to attend and make sure you do attend.

Parents when you do things like I am talking about you are teaching your children that it is okay to live by feeling rather than by the Word of God. This shows an inconsistent spiritual life and is extremely dangerous spiritually.

You say "Pastor, I do not have a conviction against it." That leads me to my next point. Our convictions come from our relationship with God! If you have a sloppy relationship with the Lord you will have sloppy convictions. You will be a feeling Christian rather than a conviction Christian and you will be headed toward deep spiritual trouble. The most important point about rearing spiritual children is the parent must have a real, passionate, intimate personal relationship with the Lord. It must not be a mechanical relationship, but a real relationship, Ephesians 6:4.

The second point is making sure you get that spiritual relationship across to the child. The child has to have a spiritual relationship with the Lord. Proverbs 23:26. You must get the heart of the child and be a good example for him to spiritually follow.

I believe it is important to not just tell the child you can not go because I said so, but to take the time and make the effort to show the child from the Word of God why. If you desire to talk about the proper kind of Biblical love show scripture and pray with the child. If the child is having a spiritual relationship with the Lord then God will deal with them.

WARNING: You can say no to the child all the time without Biblical explanation and instruction and you will raise a rebel. Proverbs mentions instruction twenty five times and God gives you opportunity to instruct. Or you can be lead by your emotions and cave in. If you fail to instruct or are lead by your emotions you lose the child spiritually both ways. You must train your child not to be lead by their emotions, but by what God says.

What do I do if I have failed? Children must see Dad and Mom respond to the Holy Spirit. God's kind of person is submissive, correctable and controlled by the Holy Spirit.

1. Confess your sin to God. I John 1:9
2. Call a family meeting and tell your children you have sinned. Parents and children need to talk about the changes you as parents and they as children are going to make. If you have sinned against someone, God tells us to go to the person you have sinned against. In reality by not leading properly you have sinned against the child. Pray for God to help you have the sensitivity to the Holy Spirit to do what is correct. This may be hard, but it is necessary. Do not go here if you are really not serious about making real spiritual, Biblical change in your life. You will not get a second chance if you are not real about this. Many times the children have gotten so far away they really do not care. Explain to the child that God has dealt with you. Explain the areas you have failed in and if there is a specific area that the Holy Spirit brings to mind. Tell them you have asked God to forgive you and then ask them to forgive you and that you want to see them live for God.
3. Pray with them and for them daily.
4. Live by your convictions (what the Bible says not your feelings) in front of them and with them the rest of the way. Make sure you are having an intimate, personal, passionate, relationship with the

Lord. Look at His
Word on what you should do, and put it into practice daily in your life and your children's life.
5. Trust God for His deliverance for them.

Many parents have older children who have not been trained according to the principles of God's Word. Do those parents get a second chance? In God's economy, it is never too late to make corrections and see fruit. But those parents must be willing to admit they made a mistake in training their children. If you are a parent who recognizes that you have not trained your children properly and desire to correct the situation you must consider the five points above and begin to bring your parenting practices into Biblical conformity. It is never too late to start. Retraining is like starting over. You need to be consistent. Say what you mean and mean what you say. You may get a second chance with your children, but you will not get a third.

Experience has shown that children under ten adapt to new rules and positive parenting practices much more readily than children in their teens. However, children in both age groups will watch you to see how sincere you are in your desire to make changes. Once you have proven your sincerity, the younger ones tend to accept your new standard and the older ones many times follow.

Changing parenting habits takes time. But each day God will give you a new start and help you to be the parent that He wants you to be. With God's help you will lead your children to responsible adulthood for His glory and your peace of mind. Do not be overwhelmed at the task. Spend time alone with God in the Word and ask Him to show you the areas that need corrected first and what is His scriptural remedy. Pray for wisdom, James 1:5. God's promise in this verse is He will give wisdom to you. James 4:8 "Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you." Making Biblical, spiritual change in our lives requires we are real with God. James 4:10 "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up." It is our prayer that you will rear your children to the honor and glory of God, I Corinthians 6:19-20.