

PARENTING IN THE SEASONS OF LIFE

Blue Ridge Mennonite Church
Carlisle, Pennsylvania
March 26, 2017

*“And Manoah said,
Now let thy words come to pass.
How shall we order the child,
and how shall we do unto him?”
Judges 13:12*

Sunday Morning

Except the Lord Build the House Psalm 127:1

Sunday Afternoon

Train up a Child in the Way He Should Go Proverbs 22:6

Sunday Evening

“My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.” Proverbs 23:26

Parenting: to be or act as one who brings forth offspring or brings up and cares for another.

Seasons - a period or time characterized by special activity.

Both children and parents have seasons of development. This is a study of how God wants us to relate to each other during these times of development and change.

Session One - Sunday Morning

“Except the Lord Build the House... Psalm 127:1”

Finding and following God’s plan for your family.

Child training grows out of the context of the home atmosphere. The home atmosphere develops from married life. Married life grows out of personal character and integrity. Everything goes back to one’s personal walk with God. Do I see my family as being God’s or is it mine? What do my choices reveal?

I. Bible Principles that Undergird Godly Home Relationships

- A. **Purpose** - *“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.” (Eph 5:31)*
“Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away...” (Mal 2:14-16a)
1. Which personality is the greatest in the marriage?
 2. Who’s will should prevail?
 3. If the designer’s will is not followed, who will be the loser?
- B. **Permanency** - *“What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” (Mar 10:9)*
1. There is a person behind our marriage. He has brought us together. We are joined for a life long purpose.
 2. Acceptance - Even as Adam and Eve, we were each individually designed for the other.
 3. Security and Trust - we do not question each other’s loyalty even when beauty fades and/or health deteriorates. By His call we each have given our hearts to each other for life.
 4. Purity - My affection, imagination and body are preserved for my spouse alone.
- C. **Provision** - *“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.” (1Pet 3:7)*

1. Overcomer attitude - There is a constant, inexhaustible supply of grace for those who in humility and oneness seek for it. We each can go forth into each demand and stage of marriage knowing His arms are undergirding us.
 2. Teamwork concept - Equal in Christ, designed for separate tasks, to give complete respect to the other in his/her role.
 3. Abundance mentality - If I invest honor and grace into my marriage, it will not be lost - we both will have it. (Eph 5:28)
- D. **Partnership** (Not just with each other but also with God) - *“Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.” (Psa 127:3)*
1. What can we give God with our marriage? What is our reward to him? We offer ourselves to God to do what only we can do.
 2. What will God give us? God gives us that which we could never supply for ourselves. He is our Partner to give us joy in the journey throughout time and eternity.
- #### II. My Calling is to Fill My God Assigned Role. (Eph 5)
- A. “Marriage is a perfect union, not of two perfect people, but of God’s perfect design for a man and woman in love.”
1. In good marriages it takes work for two very different people to blend their gifts.
 2. In a stressed marriage, it takes more work.
 3. In the judgment, God will not ask, “How did your partner do in the marriage? Did he treat you right?” He will ask, “Did you obey My directions with the partner I gave you?”
 4. In every test or stage of life we must ask, “How can we be a more perfect union?”
- B. To be successful, the husband must learn how to **love** - to discover how to make his wife feel treasured. God gives three illustrations to help men know how to be creative with this.
1. *As Christ loved the Church* (v25). Christ knew the deepest need of humanity and sacrificed all to meet that need.
 2. *As his own body* (v28). Every man feels his own needs and seeks to get to the root of the problem to address it.
 3. *As himself* (v33). A Christian man makes caring for his wife an instinctive reaction, surrounded with continual attentiveness.
 4. **All** illicit affections must be disciplined and destroyed by the light of transparency.

- C. To be successful, the wife must learn to **respect** - to discover how to make her man feel admired.
 1. Submission - being honest with opinions but willing to endeavor to make her husbands ideas and standards work.
 2. Obvious reverence and even expressions of admiration for the leadership efforts of her husband.
 3. Carefulness not to send signals of disdain, such as corrections, contentions, criticisms and control.
- D. The greatest gift parents can give their children (along for a heart-felt passion for God) is to truly love each other.
- E. Each parent's goal should be that children witness a happy resolution to problems; that the over-all atmosphere is peace.

III. Home Relationships Should be Handled with Gospel Tenderness. (Mat 19:13-15 Jesus' tenderness and acceptance of children.)

- A. We need to see our children as eternal souls and love them as God loves them.
- B. We must recognize that our children have feelings. God created all children with the ability to sense when they are loved and when their love is received and valued. Feeling loved gives children security. Being able to know love is valued gives a sense of worth. *"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:"* (Eph 4:15)
- C. For parents to handle the stresses of life in the home, they must have an emotional anchor in the Love of God. (*Rooted and grounded in love...*) (Eph 3:17)
- D. The entire Gospel message is built on the doctrine of taking personal responsibility for one's words and actions, repentance and confession when there has been error, and forgiveness and love being the norm in relationships. These virtues must be expressed in the Christian home.

IV. Signs That Home Life is Working

- A. Communication is spontaneous and easy. Parents and children share what is on their minds and on their hearts. Family members express interest in each other.
- B. Trust is evident. Parents, children do not need to keep a false front. Children are disciplined in behavior, but first they sense, then they understand the discipline is for their good.
- C. Mistakes are allowable. When people make mistakes, the matter is

corrected. Family members accept reproof from each other. They say sorry, go on and restore trust. Old issues are not revived.

V. Home Life - Creating an Atmosphere of a Blend of Love and Discipline

<p style="text-align: center;">High in Love/High in Discipline Authoritative</p> <p>Mentality: There is a higher law we all must answer to. Structure: Obvious headship and leadership. Schedule and order. Rules: Sensible and based on principle. Punishments: Firm, consistent & predictable. Affection: Visible tenderness, comfort in distress, expressions of appropriate love. Outcome: Well adjusted, able to handle responsibility.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Low in Love/High in Discipline Authoritarian</p> <p>Mentality: Domineering figure, "I am the law of this household." Structure: Patriarchal-control by moods or desires of the domineering figure. Rules: Strict rules, little mercy. Punishments: Harsh with few explanations. Affection: Not displayed. Affection or emotions are weakness. Outcome: Temporary good impressions. Tense personalities with hidden deviancies, craving love - usually looking in the wrong places.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">High in Love/Low in Discipline Indulgent</p> <p>Mentality: Your will (the child's) is our wish. Structure: Chaotic and unpredictable, the child's moods control the family. Rules: Basically non-existent Punishments: Efforts at placating the child with bursts of anger. Affection: Effusive pampering and catering to wishes. Outcome: Expectation that others will serve my interests. Easily offended by others.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Low in Love/Low in Discipline Neglectful</p> <p>Mentality: My interests or problems take priority. Structure: Each must fend for himself. Very little communication or sharing. Rules: Unspoken rule-Stay out of my way and make your own way. Punishments: Very few. Perhaps a harsh reaction if anyone interferes with the leader. Affection: In theory but is not felt. Outcome: Character is not developed, thus passions are not mastered.</p>

VI. Unwritten Rules of the Dysfunctional Home. When a couple allows differences to divide them and go unresolved it produces a tension in the home. The following patterns emerge as unwritten rules that everyone learns and follows.

- A. Don't talk - keep your thoughts to yourself, bottle up emotions.
- B. Don't trust - you never know what moods parents or others will be in, when what you say will be used against you.
- C. Don't show emotions - Emotions are a sign of weakness. You will be made fun of if you show who you really are.
- D. Don't make a mistake - It will never be forgotten and will be used against you.

Stage	Parent's Goal	Role of Parent	Anticipated Child Responses
Infant: <i>Dependent and helpless.</i>	To establish and strengthen the bond of love by unselfish, loving service	Servant/Care Giver Baby's needs are in focus and most important.	To learn to maintain eye contact and respond with smiles, cooing and laughter. To discover self and surroundings.
Toddler: <i>Self will awakens; personality emerges.</i>	To train the child to hearken and gain control over his moods and attitudes	Benevolent Dictator Loving, consistent, firm confrontation.	To accept correction. To respect the feelings of other children. To play quietly. To cry quietly. To sit still in times of worship. To eat - sleep at proper time.
Scholar: <i>Social awareness awakens</i>	To help the child develop a sound conscience - pricks in wrong doing and guides into right choices.	Governor Discipline is very much in place but almost invisible to casual observer.	To care for one's self and room, perform routine chores cheerfully & accept assignments without complaint. To have good manners; be considerate of others.
Adolescent: <i>Spiritual, social and sexual interests awaken.</i>	To lead the child into a genuine Christian conversion and develop spiritual disciplines.	Mentor/Parole Officer Confidential talks about developing interests and personal habits.	To show self discipline in sleeping, eating, work and purity habits. To maintain healthy friendships. To choose to become a Christian.
Youth: <i>Emotional, vocational and life-companion interests awaken.</i>	To help your child understand and pursue God's calling for him in life	Counselor/Accountability Providing opportunities and resources for personal interests.	To show prudence with personal finances. To show character in the choice of friends. To be responsible with personal interests. To be honest and dependable.
Adult: <i>Desire awakens to take up the duties of life.</i>	The time to be given support, guidance and freedom to be all God calls them to be.	Best Friend Mutual companionship and trust. Seeking counsel from each other.	To find and fill the place God has for them in life. To express responsibility, joy and satisfaction.

Results? tension where children cannot be relaxed. *Home life must be happy for children to desire to follow in the footsteps of father and mother.*

VII. **Building the Home through God-centered home life**

- A. Family worship on a regular/consistent basis.
 - 1. Singing songs age appropriate songs,
 - 2. Bible reading and discussions.
 - 3. Take turns praying
- B. Spontaneous spiritual responses. Breaking out into singing!
- C. Bible based home decor and reminders.
- D. Consistent congregational support. Children should sense their home exists to serve a larger entity. The family of God supercedes the nuclear family. Even though we may see the flaws in the larger body, we know church is God's plan and therefore we are willing to lay down our lives for the brethren. This brings a wonderful sense of belonging to a larger identity.

VIII. **Common Parental Mistakes that Anger Children** - Way too many youth feel justified in rebelling against church going parents. A child who is angry with his parents will feel no compulsion to follow in his parents' example or stay in his parent's church.

- A. Discipline done in anger or frustration and refusal to apologize.
- B. Discipline done because of one's own emotional needs. Allowing disobedience one day and coming down hard the next, just because it's a bad day.
- C. Being impossible to please. A child will be frustrated by a parent having too high a standard of perfection.
- D. Making promises and then breaking them, especially promises of reward.
- E. Ignoring needs in the children in order to pursue personal dreams. Our children become our best dream or worst nightmare. Some of the most tragic family reaping comes when mom was determined to have an outside business or write that book on mothering.
- F. Partiality or preferring one child over another. (Children will imagine this even if you are impartial.)
- G. Permissiveness, especially allowing children to be unkind to each other.
- H. Humiliating the child in front of peers.
- I. Comparing your child with others in a negative way.
- J. Ignoring and/or belittling inquiries and requests.

Session Two - Sunday Afternoon

“Train Up a Child in the Way He Should Go... Pro 22:6”

The why and how to train a child to hearken and to develop a clear conscience.

I. A Biblical Overview of the Dual Nature of a Child

- A. Children are created in the image of God; with the ability to develop an intimate spiritual relationship with Him.
 - 1. *“That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” (Jo 1:9)*
 - 2. *“But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.” (Lu 18:16)*
 - 3. *“Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.” (1Cor 14:20)*
- B. Children are born with a fallen or depraved human nature, with the bent and inclination to go astray.
 - 1. *“The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.” (Psa 58:3)*
 - 2. *“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:” (Rom 3:10)*
- C. Understanding this dual nature
 - 1. Enables parents to relate to both the positive and negative characteristics of their child objectively. While we are emotionally involved with our children, we should seek to avoid both positive and negative emotional extremes.
 - 2. Calls for parents to be actively engaged in child training. There is a limited time to work with their pliable nature. Like finishing concrete, the hour of work-ability soon passes.
 - 3. Gives the parent positive and negative tools to work with.
 - a. Appeal to and nurture the higher nature in the child.
 - b. Discipline expressions of the child’s lower nature.
- D. Without training the child is:
 - 1. **Fool** - One who has not been trained to accept direction outside his own will.
 - a. He may have been scolded but will not listen because he is accustomed to only follow what his flesh suggests.
 - b. He believes in the supremacy of his own ideas.
 - c. If he is corrected he reacts against and develops resistance

against the one giving correction.

- 2. **Simple** - One who has not been taught about the consequences of living after the flesh.
 - a. His curiosity leads him to experimentation with instant gratification.
 - b. Instant gratification yields shameful pleasures.
 - c. Shameful pleasures yield to raging addictions.
- 3. **Scorner** - One who mocks the righteous, seeking to dissuade him from a course of obedience.
- 4. *These character traits are alive and wreaking havoc in each new generation!*

II. Infant Stage: The season to establish strong emotional bonds.

- A. The goal is to establish the bond of love by giving unselfish, affectionate service. Also it is time to learn how much our parents loved us and understand how our Father in Heaven cares for us.
- B. The child is completely helpless and without self control.
- C. The parent’s selfishness is confronted by unrelenting demands.

III. Toddler Stage: The season to confront the toddler’s nature and train him to hearken. (Hearken: to give respectful attention.)

- A. The goal is to train the child to hearken and gain control over his moods and attitudes. He must be trained that wisdom lieth without and that it will not be learned by listening to his inner impulses - but only by denying them.
- B. The Little Criminal - inside the psyche of every toddler
 - 1. **Narcissism** - “I am the center of the universe. The world exists to serve me.”
 - 2. **Entitlement** - “If I ever played with it, if you had it too long, if I have an idea what to do with it, if I want it, I deserve to have it.”
 - 3. **Pragmatism** - “Because I am entitled to it, the rules do not apply to me. I have the right to get it in whatever way I am able, manipulation, intimidation or whatever it takes.”
 - 4. **Anarchy** - “No authority has the right to stop me. If they try I will persist in my rights.”
 - 5. **Irresponsibility** - “It’s not my fault. I can’t help what happened here. I have no idea how to resolve this problem.”
 - 6. **Instant gratification** - “I deserve the pleasure I wish for and I deserve it right now.”

- C. Ingredients needed for achieving a happy well adjusted toddler
1. How a parent has to think -
 - a. Do you have to teach a child to hit, bite, fight, disobey his parents? NO! This is his nature.
 - b. Can you teach him to be kind, loving and obedient? NO! Before you can teach a child to have right behavior you must **force** the wrong behavior to end! And bring painful consequences so the selfish patterns cease.
 - c. Heb 12:10-11 To train a child you must be willing to inflict deliberate, measured bodily pain.
 2. Normal processes of correction
 - a. Establish boundaries of acceptable behavior.
 - b. When the child steps across those boundaries, quietly say, "No." He will not hearken.
 - c. Then you inflict minor pain while saying "No."
 - d. Every time he tests those boundaries, repeat the punishment, slowly increasing the pain level each time.
 3. Tools for the trade:
 - a. Use passive restraints.
 - b. Use the rod. It is God's plan for corrective measures and the answer to anger abuse. (Pro 22:15; 13:24; 19:18; 23:13-14; 29:15,17)
 - c. Comfort following discipline. *"Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole."* (Job 5:17-18)
 4. Goals for parenting toddlers.
 - a. Convince the child wrong behavior will not be tolerated.
 - b. Convince the child the consequences of wrong behavior will be undesirable and that he will remember them.
 - c. Train the child to accept punishment without reaction.
 - d. Expect a clear look, a transparent look after discipline. Do not permit back-talk or sullenness after punishment.
 - e. Respect for other's possessions and feelings. Children must be taught not to bully or over ride each other's feelings.
 - f. The pain of punishment needs to consistently exceed the pleasure of disobedience.
 - g. Learn to adjust to a world where he is not the center of the

- attention and his wishes do not have priority in the family.
5. For moral development: From an early age, use the proper terms for all parts of the child's body. Teach the child zones, what is public and what is private. Private areas are not shameful, but are not to be handled other than for hygiene and certainly not for others to explore.
- IV. **Scholar Stage:** The season for consistent punishment to cleanse and develop the conscience. (Hebrews 5:14) Through use, the conscience develops to discern both good and evil.
- A. The goal is to help the child develop a sound conscience.
 - B. Maintain a baseline of love and acceptance.
 - C. Give and expect respect for boundaries of acceptable behavior.
 - D. Discipline with appropriate measures and degrees. The discipline is not over until the will is brought into subjection.
 - E. The pain of punishment must exceed the pleasure of disobedience.
 - F. Comfort after discipline, all signals are that the relationship is restored.
 - G. Never mention the disobedience/discipline again.
 - H. For moral development:
 1. Give him basic instruction regarding the facts of life. Usually one may begin with questions that lead the child into discussion. As you open the subject he understands he may come to you with questions. (In larger families, parents may need to keep a journal so continuity is maintained.)
 2. For boys, you will need to give frank warning about the pleasures and problems of self pleasuring.
 3. Review the parts of his body that are public property and what parts are to be kept "off limits" for everyone.
- V. **Legitimate Expectations of Parents From their Children.**
- A. **Respect** - "due regard for the feelings and rights of others."
 1. Humility before God and all delegated authority.
 2. A proper attitude toward one's own inadequacy. (Not a defeatist attitude, nor a supremacy attitude.)
 - B. **Responsibility** -
 1. Taking accountability for one's actions. Not given to blaming others for one's choices.
 2. Willingness to carry out duties assigned.
 3. Ability to see work and complete assignments.

- C. **Resourcefulness** - able to find ways to overcome difficulties.
Refusal to give up, try it again.
- VI. **A Word for the "Special Needs" child.**
 - A. Any living being that can feel pain can be conditioned.
 - B. Special needs children need extra doses of love and discipline.
 - C. Accept the child as created by God for a purpose.
 - D. Do not expect to achieve superior results by impairing the child's brain through medications.

Session Three ~ Sunday Evening

“ My Son, Give me Thine Heart, and Let Thine Eyes Observe my Ways.” Proverbs 23:26

Guiding adolescents and youth into companionship and fruitfulness.

Proverbs 23:15-35 Much of the book of Proverbs is a father (and mother) sharing their hearts with a youthful son. It is a pattern for youth/parent relationships when a proper foundation has been laid in the earlier seasons of life. This is the stage of sharing vision, of discussing concepts, of giving explanations. A child will listen and learn only if the foundation for accepting direction has been established early in life. In these stages parents and children begin to enter more and more into a holy partnership with each other and with God.

I. **Goals of Godly Parents**

- A. **Discipleship:** The process whereby parents transform a wilful child into a willing disciple, someone who will look up to them, trust them, subscribe to their values and follow their leadership. A child always struggles with independent will and a rebellious nature. Consistent consequences may bring about a behavior change and then again it may not. Winning their heart is part of the key to making them willing disciples.
- B. **Self-Control:** The ability to discipline oneself to say no to one's lower nature and yes to the call of duty.
- C. **Sensitivity to the feelings of others:** When one is the center of the universe, how others feel does not matter too much. A person who is delivered from self senses and cares about other's feelings and needs.
- D. **Transparency in accountability:** Keeping openness and trust and going to their parents with questions or problems beyond their ability to resolve.

II. **Adolescence - When Spiritual, Social and Sexual Interests Awaken**

- A. The goal is to lead the child into a vibrant Christian experience.
- B. Transfer accountability from parents to Christ and the Brotherhood.
- C. Help the child evaluate his friends. Why does he enjoy the friends he does? What needs to change in his life so he is attracted to better friends?
- D. For moral development, you will need to have frank discussions

about the development of his body:

1. What to expect in the development (before it takes place.)
 2. What habits are to be avoided (before experimentation takes place.)
 3. What temptations he may be exposed to.
 4. The bondage of addictions that will come if he experiments with sin.
- E. Give clear signals that he may take you into confidences regarding any fears he may have and you will not make fun of him.

III. Youth - When Emotional, Vocational and Life - Companion Interests Awaken

- A. The goal is to help your child understand and pursue God's calling for him in life.
- B. Encourage your child to share what his dreams are for life.
- C. Give guidance where you feel his dreams may not be realistic for his nature or your resources.
- D. Indicate your willingness to help him achieve realistic goals.
- E. Be his partner in achieving adult privileges
1. Acquiring a driver's license.
 2. Opening a savings, then checking account.
 3. Getting a job and developing experience with handling finances.
- F. Encourage your child to share his spiritual and emotional journey, what are his greatest temptations, fears, and struggles.
- G. When your child shares emotional struggles, help him understand the need to discipline his thoughts but to realize emotional struggles are normal. Be very slow to run to the medicine cabinet or to the "professional" for things you will benefit in talking through.

IV. General guidelines for adolescents and youth.

- A. **Maintain an atmosphere of leadership and involvement in your child's life.** Refuse to be intimidated. Rule of thumb: *When internal controls are not working, external controls must be put in place for character and conviction to develop.* The temptation is when youth fret about the control you give them, the standard you wish to hold them to, to begin to back off, hoping they will see it on their own.
1. Growing up on the outside and growing up on the inside are two different things. Outward ability does not guarantee

license and liberty.

2. When youth do not behave appropriately, dress themselves consistently, make spiritual choices with their resources, it is not only the youth who are to blame but also their parents. The conduct of the youth is the responsibility of the parents.
 3. Parents have the responsibility to know where their children are, not only physically, but also morally, emotionally, socially and spiritually.
 4. When youth do not obey parental directions, parents have a responsibility to deny privileges until the course is corrected.
- B. **Do Not Permit a Generation Gap.** *"I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father."* (2Jo 1:4) It is the Bible norm for youth to practice Christian principles in a similar manner as their parents. There should be no practice gap between parents and their youth. Rule of thumb: *When youth begin to reflect or display values different from their parents, something is wrong that must be corrected.*
1. When worldliness and rebellion become the norm for our youth, the course of the church will be affected.
 2. Do not let you youth run with their peers at too young an age.
 - a. Youth crave acceptance. They want to fit in.
 - b. Youth crave attention. They want to be different.
 - c. Let that acceptance and attention come from you.
 - d. If youth looks more to his peer group for his acceptance and attention than to his parents, then he will not find the right guidance or direction.
 3. Be on guard for trends that are influencing the youth.
 4. Dress and appearance issues.
 5. Reading material.
 6. Cell phone, texting, internet issues.
 7. Guard music choices: ungodly music will feed rebellion.
- C. **Preserve Moral Purity Through Guidance, Protection and Ongoing Accountability.** *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."* (1Jo 1:7) Rule of thumb *When the door of fellowship begins to close, look for the reason.* It is parent's responsibility to find out where a child is morally, especially when the parents sense something is coming up between them.

1. There is a Satan, a world and the flesh that wish to corrupt the morals of our youth. A youth that is corrupt in their morals becomes reprobate in their judgement. A corrupted conscience has no stopping point.
2. See Proverbs 7. It is parent's responsibility to inform the child of his development, warn him of temptations he will face and instruct him how to respond when he finds himself tempted. Instruction creates bonding, and bonding provides immunity against temptation. Inform him as to the emptiness he will experience if he experiments with sin. Some areas to cover.
 - a. Personal development and curiosity about the opposite sex.
 - b. Exposure to predators or undisciplined companions.
 - c. Masturbation: gratifying one's own sexual desires.
 - d. Pornography in pictures or descriptive writings
 - e. Carnal courtship: one seemingly innocent pleasure soon becomes commonplace and leads to the next innocent step. There are about seven steps between holding hands and fornication. Carnal courtship is allowing oneself to become involved in that process.

D. Parental Involvement in Courtship Rule of thumb: *Courtship is intended to extend the family borders, not isolate members from their family ties.* Youth need to be warned about clandestine emotional involvements and how these involvements stunt emotional, social and spiritual development.

1. The parents should have the say whether or not a child is mature or enough to begin a special friendship.
2. Courtship should be for the purpose of marriage - not just for fun. If parents sense a friendship is for selfish purposes, they have the responsibility to stop it.
3. It is right for youth to discuss specific prospects with their parents before emotional bonding occurs.
4. Parents should monitor the activities, the standards and the rate of emotional attachment as courtship progresses.

V. Adult Stage - Best Friends for Life

- A. When a parent determines to be just a friend at any other stage in the child's development, he will stunt his child's development.

Immature children need parents to be parents; not best friends.

- B. The time comes when children need to be turned loose, to be adults on their own right, especially in marriage. We cannot control them, they are given over to their companions and to God.
- C. Never underestimate the power of prayer and Christian fellowship. Powerful bonds should be established through shared memories and common goals that should follow you through life.

Example

He whipped his boy for lying,
and his cheeks were flaming red,
And of course there's no denying
there was truth in what he said -
That a liar's always hated;
but the little fellow knew
That his father often stated
many things that were untrue.

He caught the youngster cheating,
and he sent him up to bed,
And its useless now repeating
all the bitter things he said;
He talked of honor loudly,
and a lesson to be learned,
And forgot he'd boasted proudly
of the cunning tricks he'd turned.

He heard the youngster swearing,
and he punished him again -
He'd have no boy as daring
as to utter words profane.
Yet the youngster could have told him,
poor misguided little elf,
That it seemed unfair to scold him
when he often cursed, himself.

All in vain is splendid preaching
and the noble things we say;
All our talk is wasted teaching
if we do not lead the way.
We can never, by reviewing
all the sermons on the shelves,
Keep the younger hands from doing
what we often do ourselves.

He sensed his wife was grieving
as a tear slid down her cheek,
So he gave her words endearing
though his reservoir was weak,
They never saw that Henry
had looked up just in time
To capture in his memory
the tenderness sublime.

He glanced down at his dashboard
and quickly slowed the car,
He stopped fully at the stop sign,
and looked both near and far,
He nodded to the neighbor
and politely said "hello"
And marveled that his son
seemed to honor people so.

He bowed his head in sorrow
at the cruel words foes had said,
The tears fell in his dinner
as he tried to eat his bread,
But he smiled in sweet acceptance
not resenting grief and pain,
Should we wonder that his children
see the rainbows through the rain?

There is gain in splendid preaching,
and in noble things we say,
But our talk is wasted teaching
if we do not lead the way,
We will ever by justly living
all the sermons on the shelves,
Lead the younger hands in doing
what we often do ourselves,

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Author unknown for first four verses, last four verses by Stephen Ebersole