

HOW TO LOSE A CHILD

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Children are definitely a blessing from God. The Psalmist said, “Behold, children *are* a heritage from the LORD, The fruit of the womb *is* a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So *are* the children of one's youth. Happy *is* the man who has his quiver full of them; They shall not be ashamed, But shall speak with their enemies in the gate” (Psa. 127:3-5). When God entrusts a husband and wife with something so valuable, He expects that proper stewardship will be demonstrated according to His directives. Paul commanded, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER,’ which is the first commandment with promise: ‘THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU AND YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.’ And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:1-4). Training a child in the way of God may, at times, require that Mom or Dad spank their child in order to train them properly. Solomon said, “Do not withhold correction from a child, For *if* you beat him with a rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod, And deliver his soul from hell” (Pro. 23:13-14).

If parents are going to rear godly children, they must train them properly. Have you ever known members of the Lord's church that have lost their children to the world? It is the case that a child may fall away no matter the upbringing they had, but, often it is because of their upbringing. So that parents may be able to fulfill the obligation that God has placed before them, they must be aware of the dangers and pitfalls that are presented to both parent and child in this life. If a parent were to desire to lose a child to the world, the first thing they would do is make no effort to require obedience.

How many times have we watched as a parent debated with a child in an effort to make him obey? One must keep in mind that the first introduction to authority for any child is experienced under the guidance of his parents. If parents are not able to instill in their children the proper respect for authority, it should come as no surprise when they show no respect for authority beyond the home. Countless men and women are occupying jail cells today because they have no respect for the civil authority under which they live. Not only do they disregard civil authority, which God ordained, they have no desire to obey God Himself (Rom. 13:1-4).

Perhaps, the most effective way to lose a child is by not being the proper example to him or her. As parents, we must behave the way that we want our children to behave. If we do not monitor the activities in our own lives, it will become glaringly apparent to our children that we are living in hypocrisy. Far too often, a parent in their older years will grieve over children that do not put emphasis on godly things in their lives. However, it is usually the case that they were not the proper example to their children when they had that opportunity. Solomon warned, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Pro. 22:6). If a parent does not obey the commandment to assemble with the saints each time they meet (Heb. 10:23-25), then the child will not feel that it is necessary to always be present. Anytime a person places a higher importance on physical things than on spiritual things, they are showing that God is not worthy of making Him the priority. How are parents going to be able to train their children to live moral lives if they allow them to watch immoral behavior on TV and at the movies? How is a parent going to be able to teach a child that using bad language is not appropriate behavior if they are allowed to listen to it in the music they choose? If parents allow their children to attend school dances, how well will they listen when mom and dad teach them that lasciviousness will cause them to lose their souls (Gal. 5:19-21)?

Finally, another way to lose a child is to allow them to choose to behave like the world. All good parents will readily admit to making their children eat healthy foods, brush their teeth, bathe, and a myriad of other necessities in life. However, when it comes to their spirituality, many parents will allow their children to choose their own paths. That is not training a child in the instruction of the Lord! Faithful Christian parents will require that their children behave in a godly way as long as they live under their care, whether the child wants to or not. Many have stated that they do not want to force “religion” on their children, but they do not mind forcing other things on them, like the previously mentioned tasks.

If parents are more concerned with popularity amongst their children’s peers than for their children to be pleasing to God, they are well on their way to losing the most precious gift that God has given them, aside from the sacrifice of Christ and their spouses. It is a great responsibility to rear children in this world and it becomes more difficult if we do not do it the way God has commanded. May we all pray for our children!