

Joy! April 2002

Home schooling

Are we cloning or are we educating?

The golden thread from God to the children goes through the parent. Parents and other authority figures – such as teachers, church leaders and grandparents – are representative of God. These representatives can either portray a divine image from God, like love, truth, compassion and grace, or ungodly images like distrust, hate, lack of compassion, lack of mercy, rejection or even abuse.

There is more abuse going on in this kind of relationship than we can imagine, because many of those authority figures do not really understand the responsibility they have and therefore misuse it.

It is also a shock for children, because they expect to be in a safe place when they are with these authority figures. Firstly, they do not understand that it is God who has given them this authority. Secondly, they do not realise the major responsibility that goes with it. This responsibility does not mean that you own the child, but that you have the task to facilitate the development and education of the child God has given you.

During consultation with home educators, it has become apparent that this is one of the most crucial reasons why some parents do not cope with home education. In many ways, parents themselves are still suffering from the damage done to them by authority figures.

Parents take their children out of school to start with the educational process at home, yet find themselves bound by either a need for perfect behaviour (and to them control their kids into submission) , or they buy a very formal curriculum, which creates a very controlled situation at home.

Parents do this because they themselves have not been accepted as children, and have tried their whole lives to get recognition and acceptance by doing things perfectly. The home-school set-up then falls into the same category. This mother would normally say: “Just do as I say!”

Parents who, in their own childhoods, were encouraged to continually perform to keep others happy, are inclined to do this for their children. Just keep them happy.

In these homes there is little or inconsistent discipline. The parents feel their children should be happy at all times, and they experience condemnation if the children are bored or frustrated, or if they have to work through some necessary skills that must be learnt, like spelling, multiplication tables or other important repetitive work.

When parents were spoiled as children, they tend to be demanding towards life, church and their own family. Other people can hardly ever meet their needs. This mother, for instance, will be very disillusioned whenever she is confronted with difficulties in her home school. She very often says that she can only do home education if the father is doing maths, or she can only do home education if someone else will iron the clothes.

In most instances, this mother also overprotects her children and does too many things for them with the result that the children will be spoiled.

If parents are being led by what was done to them in their childhood and if they live by this, they are not busy with proper education, but with cloning. They then only duplicate the iniquity of the forefathers, and the result for the next generation will be the same for the next generation.

Don't they understand what has happened at the Cross? They are not co-workers in the process of setting their children free, but are actually keeping them in bondage.

True education is when we grasp our responsibility as authority figures in our children's lives and we facilitate their development to full maturity in Christ. We equip them for real life by submitting them to a process of discipline in order to shape their hearts into honouring and obeying God and their parents.

They learn self-control by doing tasks that they do not necessarily like to do. The Word refers to three ways of disciplining:

- Instruction, reproof, correction (1 Timothy 3: 15 & 16)
- Carrying the consequences for their deeds (Galatians 6: 7&8)
- Physical discipline if the child wilfully disobeys the parents (Proverbs 22:15,23: 13&14)

Parents who are not bound by their past, do not compromise on the disciplining process. They do not try to keep their children happy or to find their own fulfilment through the child or through the educational process.

They focus on God's purposes for them and their children's lives.

We all fail at times on our educational path, because we are so unreal in our homes. We live double lives by being people who have been cloned. We then expect a whole household to submit to that. The children and other family members get discouraged and often say: "It's out of reach. I can never make it." When we fail in this area we must repent and part with the bad behaviour which came down to us from previous generations. We must also submit ourselves to the counsel of God. It does wonders if we can repent openly to God in front of our children. We hereby also teach them the way of repentance. We measure our behaviour and repent solely then to what the Word says about a matter; not according to the expectations of the mother or father.

In this way we are representing God's Grace, and bring freedom not condemnation.

I believe God knows parents are not perfect, yet He has given us children. Our children belong to God. Let us take up the authority God has given us and let us be worthy representatives as authority figures in our children's life.

Let our homes be a safe place where we can be real with one another, and grow into full maturity in Christ. Not living up to the false expectations of past generations, but live up to Godly standards and be submissive vessels of God.