

PARENTING ADULT CHILDREN

During the month of September, we began a study on parenting children during a time of national moral and spiritual decline.

Our final lesson is based the last point of last week's lesson: "Your success or failure as a spiritual parent does not depend upon your children's volitional choices as adults." There was a lot of interest for this class.

Proverbs 20:11 offers us similar advice through the different English translations.

"It is by his deeds that a lad distinguishes himself, if his conduct is pure and right." (NAS)

"Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right." (NIV)

"Even a child is known by his acts whether [or not] what he does is pure and right." (Amplified Bible)

FOUR points on Parenting Adult Children.

1. Last week we used Noah and his adult children as an example of the principle

"your success or failure as a spiritual parent does not depend upon your children's volitional choices as adults."

We learned that Noah was a spiritual parent who lived and raised his children by the standard of the word of God (Gen.6: 5-10:8) [survived] (1 Pet.3: 20).

Noah was described as a parent who was righteous, blameless, and walked with God and raised his children to do likewise (Gen.6: 9).

There are two issues to consider about parenting. The **first issue** is that parents have an important influence over the way their children think and behave (like father like son). The **second issue** is that Satan's has an important influence in the world over the way their children think and behave (1 John 2:16).

After the flood, Noah committed the sin of drunkard (Gen.9:20-21). And his youngest married son, Ham, committed a sin that took advantage of the drunken condition of his father after the flood that resulted in the "Curse of Canaan" (Gen.9:20-27). Ham's youngest son and descendants were cursed as Noah's will.

Parents are not responsible for the choices of their adult children. Adult children are responsible for the consequences of their own behavior.

2. Another example is David and his adult children.

"Your success or failure as a spiritual parent does not depend upon your adult children's volitional choices."

David was a spiritual parent who lived and raised his children by the standard of God's word – "Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching." (Prov.1: 8) [Solomon's reflection upon David's teaching.]

After becoming king and blessed by spiritual growth momentum, David sinned against Bathsheba, Uriah, divine institutions, and God (2 Sam.11-12; 11:9, 13-14).

Soon after, his oldest son Amnon raped his half-sister and David didn't deal with it probably either as a father or as a king. The brother of the half-sister, Absalom, murdered Amnon and led a revolt against David that turned into a civil war and eventually Absalom's death (2 Sam.12-18).

It was a sad funeral with David weeping and repeating, "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you - O Absalom, my son, my son!" (2 Sam.18:33)

In spite of David's parental remorse, the principle still holds true – "your success or failure as a spiritual parent does not depend upon your adult child's volitional choices."

3. The third example is the high priest and Judge Eli and his adult sons.

Eli was a spiritual parent who lived and taught his sons to live by the standard of the word of God – "If a man sins against another man, God may mediate for him; but if a man sins against the Lord, who will intercede for him? His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the Lord's will to put them to death." (1 Sam.2:25)

"Eli's sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the Lord." (2:12) the congregation knew it.

Yet Hanna gave Samuel to be parented by Eli with the Lord's approval (1:22-28) – "So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life he will be given over to the Lord. And he worshipped the Lord there."

"And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the Lord and with men." (2:26)

"The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli." (3:1)

What was true for Noah and for David was also true for Eli - "Your success or failure as a spiritual parent does not depend upon your adult children's volitional choices." [Pay attention to point 4.]

4. Your consistent spiritual walk with the Lord measures your success or failure as a spiritual parent.

The father of the two prodigal sons of Luke 15:11-32 was a good spiritual parent because of his consistent walk with the Lord. His success or failure as a spiritual parent was not dependent upon the volitional choices of his adult children.

Zechariah and Elizabeth were good spiritual parents because of their consistent walk with the Lord (Luke 1-3). Their son's success or failure was dependent upon his own volitional choices as an adult - "I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." (Luke 7:28) [Jesus]

Grandmother Lois and mother Eunice were good spiritual parents to Timothy because of their consistent walk with the Lord and set a good example. "I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also." (2 Tim.1:5)

"Even a child is known by his acts whether [or not] what he does is pure and right." (Prov.20: 11)

YOUR SUCCESS AS A SPIRITUAL PARENT DEPENDS UPON YOUR CONSISTENT WALK WITH THE LORD.