

## Lesson Six

# Virtues to Instill in Our Children

## Worship

Read responsively Proverbs 4:10-13.

Leader: Listen, my son, accept what I say,

**Group: and the years of your life will be many.**

L: I guide you in the way of wisdom

**G: and lead you along straight paths.**

L: When you walk, your steps will not be hampered;

**G: when you run, you will not stumble.**

L: Hold on to instruction, do not let it go;

**G: guard it well, for it is your life.**

Prayer: Dear Lord, we all sin in many ways. We confess our sins to you and ask for your mercy. We also ask that you show mercy to our children. You alone can work on their hearts and lead them to want to serve you. You alone can work in their lives to discipline them and bless them. Continue to work in them and in us. Give us opportunities to play a role in that work. Help us influence our children through the nurture and admonition you give them in your Word. Bless our work to your glory. Amen.

## Studying God's Word

### Leading our children to be obedient

No matter what age, people are self-willed and not inclined to submit to authority. It is the will of the superior versus the will of the underling. Our sinful human nature does not want to obey, just as Adam and Eve did not obey the command the Lord gave them in the Garden of Eden.

1. How do you define *obedience*?

The act of doing what one is told to do, *submitting* to the command or will of others.

2. In the last lesson we talked about the honor and respect children owe others. Agree or disagree. Children who honor will be children who also obey.

Children who honor will have an easier time obeying. They have learned respect and how to show consideration and concern for others.

3. There are two ways to build obedience. These methods are at opposite ends of the continuum. Can you describe them? Think of some ways you might change how you are trying to influence your children to be obedient.

The first is obedience that comes from fear of punishment. I drive the speed limit on the freeway because I don't want to get a ticket and have to pay a fine. I follow the speed limit out of fear of what may happen if I don't obey the posted sign.

The second is obedience that springs from the faith and love that are ours in Christ Jesus. When I realize what great things my Savior has done for me, I want to respond by showing love through obeying.

Responses to the second point will vary. Try to get the class to share how they may be doing things wrong and give examples of how they are doing things right. If possible, prime the pump with examples of your own.

4. Read Ephesians 6:1-3. What truth is taught in this passage? How might you use this truth in influencing your children to be obedient?

The Lord promises a special blessing—long life—to children who obey their parents. There is nothing wrong with reminding children of this blessing when encouraging them to be obedient.

5. Discuss the following practical guidelines as you work to influence your children to be obedient.

- Beware of a multitude of rules and regulations.

This can confuse children simply because the quantity of rules may be hard for them to differentiate and understand.

- Let the child know what you want him or her to do.

Children must know what is expected of them. Depending on the age, they may not fully understand why they must follow a rule. This needs to be clarified.

- Don't forget what you told the child to do.

Children may forget to obey. It is important that the parent remembers what he or she told the child to do and then follow through to see that it is done.

- Don't coax or use flattery.

Although this type of motivation may have its place under the right circumstances, it may teach children that before they do something they can expect coaxing, perhaps a little bribery or flattery. Children need to learn to obey without expecting these things.

- Follow through with a word of appreciation when the child does the right thing.

When a child obeys and the opportunity presents itself, a sincere heartfelt commendation to the child will go a long way in cementing this positive behavior. If a child does not obey, or rebels at obeying, that is a situation that must be dealt with immediately.

### **Influencing children to be truthful**

6. What do the following Scripture passages tell us about why children should be truthful?

- Deuteronomy 32:4

Our God is a faithful God who does no wrong. He is a God of truth.

- Psalm 15:1,2  
The Lord loves those who speak the truth from their hearts.
  - Zechariah 8:16  
A believer is to speak the truth to others.
  - Ephesians 5:9  
“The fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth.”
7. The following is a list of principles and advice relating to influencing children to be truthful. Read the list and discuss the points as you wish.
- When asked to tell the truth, children must tell all that they know.
  - Children must not intentionally misrepresent or conceal anything.
  - At times, to maintain a trust or a confidence, a child may refuse to tell what they know. See Proverbs 11:13.
  - Children must never deceitfully defame others by telling lies about them.
  - Children should not exaggerate, but should stick to the facts.
  - Children must learn to keep promises. If they find they cannot keep a promise, they must explain to the person to whom the promise was made why they can't keep the promise.
  - Children also need to learn that they should be slow to make promises, but conscientious in keeping them.
  - Parents need to model truthfulness to children in all they do. Do they return change to the cashier when too much is given? Do they cheat on their income taxes and condone doing so? Do they tell “little white lies” to make situations work to their advantage? Children are watching and listening to adults.

### **Influencing children to be diligent**

8. Define *diligence*.
- A diligent person is willing to work. While the worker is working, he or she works willingly. A diligent worker sees hard and tedious work through to completion. *Diligence* and *laziness* are opposites.
9. What does God's Word tell us about work?
- Genesis 2:15  
Before sin came into the world, work was a pleasure and enjoyable to do.
  - 2 Thessalonians 3:10  
God uses work as a means to provide for us. This seems to be an “aha” moment in many catechism classes when children realize there is a reason for work as ordained by our heavenly Father.
  - John 9:4  
Jesus worked and did not waste time.

- Ephesians 4:28

God blesses the labor of our hands. He enables us to show acts of mercy to those who have less than we.

## **Summary**

Those who influence children want the children to be obedient. They want them first to be obedient to God's will and second to the will of those over them. In this area, as in all other areas, children are influenced through the gospel and through our gentle and sensitive way of dealing with them. Other areas of influence include helping them be truthful in what they say and diligent when given a task or job to perform.

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, thank you for the children you have placed into our care. Help us build them up in the faith and guide them in a way that pleases you. When we fail, forgive us. Make up for our wrongs and bless the children in spite of us. Bless the right things we do and use us as you intended, namely, to be your hands and feet in caring for these young members of your kingdom. May these children be kept close to their Savior Jesus, who has given them forgiveness and eternal life. Thank you for the time you have given us to study your Word. Bless us in the days ahead. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.