

RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION FOR THE CHURCH LIFE

Message Two

Compiling Children's Lessons that Build up a Proper Humanity and Lead the Children into a Proper Enjoyment (1)

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:40, 51-52

- I. When we speak of the children's work, we are referring to children who have not graduated from elementary school but are more than five years old; these are the target of our children's work:**
- A. In Christianity, doing the children's work is considered to be like operating a school; hence, it is called Sunday school:
 - 1. In the Sunday school classes they may use textbooks; we do not agree with this method; we feel that our children's meeting should not have the flavor of a Sunday school—Rev. 18:4; Heb. 13:13.
 - 2. From our experience we feel that if we regard the children's work as a school and teach our children from textbooks, it will be of more harm than benefit to them:
 - a. This method educates the children with premature knowledge; later, when the children grow up, they will not be very open to listen to the truth.
 - b. The children hear too many Bible stories in Sunday school, and their hearing becomes dull; when they grow up, they will not be moved by what they hear—cf. Heb. 5:11.
 - c. Hence, the material that we prepare for the children's work should not be influenced by the material used in the Sunday schools in Christianity; not only should we not use their material; we should not even reference it.
 - B. We should begin by teaching the children how to be a proper human being; we should show them that man is different from the animals and different from the trees, plants, and flowers:
 - 1. After this we should speak of man's character and conduct; we should teach the children to honor their parents and be loving, pure, obedient, honest, and proper in their conduct; we must be careful not to give them a religious thought or concept.
 - 2. When we speak of the difference between man and the animals, we can mention that man was created by God and also that the heavens and the earth were created by God and a little about how man was created in God's image; we do not need to say more than this.
 - C. In caring for young children, we must be careful not to make them religious, not to pass on mere religious knowledge, and not to tell them too many Bible stories; furthermore, we should not force them to pray, if we practice these matters, we will be successful—Matt. 9:16-17; 2 Cor. 3:6; John 5:39-40; 16:12-13; cf. Matt. 2:4-6:
 - D. The first thing we should do with elementary age children is to help them to know how to be persons with a proper humanity; we must help them to know what a proper humanity is and how to behave as human beings—Luke 2:40, 51; Prov. 1:1-4; 2 Tim. 2:21:
 - 1. At first we should simply help them to grow up as proper persons with the full understanding and realization of what a proper humanity is.

2. To this end, we can have many lessons and use demonstrations and illustrations; we can bring a small animal or some flowers and talk about the difference between man and these things.
3. We must also help them to know how to honor their parents, love others, and know the proper elements of human morality, such as humility, patience, and kindness—Exo. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-2; 4:32; cf. 2 Tim. 3:2.
4. In this way we can build them up as proper materials for the Lord's use; to receive the Lord and enjoy Him requires us to have a proper humanity as good material.
5. Within the six years of the elementary age, there are about three hundred Lord's Days to build up the children in their human character; it is very helpful for us to do this.

II. To compile material for the teachers, we need a number of brothers who know the truth and are also skilled in writing; the material does not need to be in five or six levels; we need only three levels—elementary, intermediate, and advanced—cf. Titus 2:1-8; 1 Cor. 3:1-2:

- A. The material for the elementary level should be entirely from a child's perspective; we should tell them that man is not the same as the animals and explain to them why man is different—cf. Gen. 1—2:7.
- B. Gradually, as we proceed to the intermediate level, we can give the children a little more Bible knowledge:
 1. We can convey to them a deep impression that there is a God in the universe, that man fell and committed sin, and that the Lord Jesus is our Savior.
 2. We do not have to give too much doctrine, but we should impress them with the facts in the Bible.
- C. Then when the children proceed to an advanced level, they will almost be ready to follow the messages in the big meetings:
 1. The children do not need too much doctrine; they only need a general knowledge of the truth.
 2. This requires the careful work of the brothers who compile the teaching material so that the children do not receive premature knowledge.
- D. There is the need for some brothers and sisters to spend the time to prepare lessons and instructions on how to use them:
 1. There is no need to compose the lessons in full; we can simply give some guidelines, such as which week to speak concerning honoring our parents and some hints on how to illustrate this lesson.
 2. After being trained, each teacher can choose the particular illustrations he will use; we should not prepare uniform printed lessons to be read in each class.
 3. Perhaps half a page of points, illustrations, and instructions is adequate; it should be easy to prepare lessons in this way.