

Vessels for God's Economy

A conference for parents and serving ones

The Church in Denver

February 23, 2019

Message One

Our Children's Work & Our Parenting Work: Preparing Vessels for God's Economy

- I. Preparing vessels for God's economy is our highest work—2 Tim. 2:21**
- A. God's heart's desire is to dispense Himself in His Trinity into tripartite man to make them His house, His corporate expression—Gen. 1:26–27; 2:7–9; Eph. 1:9; 2:4–5, 7–9, 18–22; 3:8–11; 2 Tim. 2:20–22
- 2 Tim. 2:20–22 But in a great house there are not only gold and silver vessels but also wooden and earthen; and some are unto honor, and some unto dishonor. 21 If therefore anyone cleanses himself from these, he will be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, useful to the master, prepared unto every good work. 22 But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*
- B. God's economy is a matter of dispensing—John 3:5–6, 14–16; Eph. 1:10, 13, 22–23
- C. Our highest status before God is that of vessels—Rom. 9:21, 23; 2 Cor. 4:6–7; 2 Tim. 2:21
- Romans 9:23 In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory.*
- 2 Corinthians 4:6–7 Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us.*
- II. As parents and as serving ones in the church, our highest work is to prepare vessels for God's economy**
- A. When the Lord comes back, He will ask us only two questions
1. *How much of Me have you gained in your vessel?*—Matt. 25:4
 2. *How many vessels have you gained that are useful to Me?* —Matt. 25:16; Rom. 1:14–16; 15:16; Gal. 4:19
- Romans 1:14–16 I am debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to foolish; 15 So, for my part, I am ready to announce the gospel to you also who are in Rome. 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes, both to Jew first and to Greek.*
- Romans 15:16 That I might be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, a laboring priest of the gospel of God, in order that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, having been sanctified in the Holy Spirit.*

Galatians 4:19 My children, with whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you.

- B. Our children are our best source of materials for God's house—2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15

2 Tim. 1:5 Having been reminded of the unfeigned faith in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded dwells also in you.

2 Tim. 3:15 And that from a babe you have known the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

III. As parents and as serving ones in the church, we are preparing vessels that are sanctified, useful to the Master, and prepared unto every good work—2 Tim. 2:21

2 Tim. 2:21 If therefore anyone cleanses himself from these, he will be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, useful to the master, prepared unto every good work.

- A. Honor is the nature of the vessel's use and of our work

- B. Sanctified is a matter of position—Matt. 23:17; 2 Tim. 2:19b–21

2 Tim. 2:19b Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness.

1. For our children to be sanctified, we need to be sanctified—Phil. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12; John 17:19

Phil. 3:17 Be imitators together of me, brothers, and observe those who thus walk even as you have us as a pattern.

John 17:19 And for their sake I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

2. For our children to be sanctified, we need to guard them—John 17:12

John 17:12 When I was with them, I kept them in Your name, which You have given to Me, and I guarded them; and not one of them perished, except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

3. For our children to be sanctified, we need to train them—Prov. 22:6

Prov. 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go, And even when he is old he will not depart from it.

- C. Useful is a matter of function

1. We can only be useful to God to the extent that God has been dispensed into us

2. Those who are prepared over a lifetime of dispensing can be the most useful to God (Moses, Samuel, Daniel, Paul)

- D. Prepared is a matter of training—2 Tim. 2:21; Prov. 22:6

IV. Timothy's faith was a matter of dispensing—2 Tim. 1:5–6; Rom. 1:11

2 Tim. 1:5–6 Having been reminded of the unfeigned faith in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded dwells also in you. 6 For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

Rom. 1:11 *For I long to see you that I may impart to you some spiritual gift so that you may be established.*

A. Hence, our children's work and even our parenting work should be to dispense God into the children—Deut. 11:19

Deut. 11:19 And you shall teach them to your children, talking of them, when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.

B. For this we need the Lord—Col. 1:27–29

Col. 1:27–29 *To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory, 28 Whom we announce, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man full-grown in Christ; 29 For which also I labor, struggling according to His operation which operates in me in power.*

Message Two

Preparing Vessels by Training

Prov. 22:6 *Train up a child in the way he should go, And even when he is old he will not depart from it.*

I. Guarding the vessels unto sanctification—John 17:12a; 2 Cor. 4:4–7

John 17:12 *When I was with them, I kept them in Your name, which You have given to Me, and I guarded them; and not one of them perished...*

2 Cor. 4:4 *In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them.*

2 Cor. 4:7 *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us.*

A. There is a battle going on over our children's vessels—2 Cor. 4:4, 7

B. Guarding our children from any evil influence—Acts 20:28; John 17:12a

Acts 20:28 *Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood.*

C. By sanctifying ourselves—John 17:16, 19; 1 Tim. 4:12

John 17:16 *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*

John 17:19 *And for their sake I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.*

1 Tim. 4:12 *...be a pattern to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.*

D. With the word of God—John 17:17

John 17:17 *Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.*

II. Training in the Word of God—2 Tim. 3:15–17; Deut. 6:1–2, 5–9, 20–23; 11:18–21; Gen. 1:1; Eccl. 12:1; Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21; Exo. 10:8–9; Acts 21:5; Gen. 18:17–19; Josh. 24:15

A. Filling our houses (and our lives) with God's word

Deut. 6:6–9 *And these words, which I command you today, shall be upon your heart; 7 And you shall repeat them to your children, and speak about them when you sit in your house and when you journey on the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up; 8 And you shall bind them on your hand as a sign, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes; 9 And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

Deut. 11:18–19 *Therefore you shall lay up these words of Mine in your heart and in your soul; and you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes. 19 And you shall teach them to your children, talking of them, when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.*

B. Causing them to know God's Word—2 Tim. 3:15

2 Tim. 3:15 And that from a babe you have known the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

C. Imparting the Word of God into their vessels

D. Commanding our children in the way of the Lord—Gen. 18:17–19

Gen. 18:17–19 And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do; 18 seeing that Abraham had surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19 For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he has spoken of him.

III. Training the conscience—Gen. 3:7; 4:6–7; Rom. 2:14–15; Titus 1:15; 1 Tim. 4:1–2; Eph. 4:19; Isa. 7:16a; Prov. 3:12; 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13–14; 29:15, 17; Eph. 6:4; Heb. 12:7–11; John 16:8; Prov. 20:27; Psalm 18:28; 119:130; Luke 15:8; 2 Cor. 4:4, 6; Ezek. 36:26

Rom. 2:15 Who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness with it and their reasonings, one with the other, accusing or even excusing them).

A. The function of the conscience is to know right from wrong

B. A trained conscience preserves the children from corruption and brings them under God's rule

C. A trained conscience gives the Spirit the ground to convict and bring them to Christ

IV. Training the mind to think proper thoughts—Prov. 1:7–9; 2 Cor. 4:4; Luke 8:12; 2 Cor. 3:14; Col. 1:21; Rom. 8:7; 2:15; Prov. 23:7a; Eph. 2:3; 2 Cor. 11:3; Gen. 3:1–6; John 13:2; 1 Peter 1:13a; Matt. 3:2 & note 2²; Mark 1:15 & note 15²; 2 Cor. 10:4–5 & notes 5^{1–2}; Rom. 12:2; 2 Tim. 2:23 & notes 23^{1–2}; Acts 7:22; Phil. 4:8–9; 2 Tim. 3:15 & notes 15^{1–2}

A. A trained mind results in a vessel useful to the Lord (e.g., Moses, Paul)

B. Proper training of the mind preserves the children's vessel

V. Training the heart to love rightly—Prov. 4:23; 2 Tim. 3:1–4; 1 Tim. 6:10–11a; 2 Cor. 3:16; Rom. 10:9–10

A. A trained heart determines the course of our life—Prov. 4:23

B. Satan uses an untrained heart to usurp and corrupt man to hinder God's purpose—2 Tim. 3:1–4; 1 Tim. 6:10–11a;

C. Our heart is the primary organ by which we receive God's salvation—2 Cor. 3:16; Rom. 10:9–10

VI. Training the children to control their emotions—Eph. 6:4; Gen. 4:5b–8; Prov. 16:32; 25:28

Gen. 4:5b–8 ...And Cain became very angry, and his countenance fell. 6 And Jehovah said to Cain, Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and his desire is for you, but you must rule over him. 8 And Cain said to Abel his brother, Let us go into the field. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him.

Prov. 16:32 He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty; And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.

VII. Training the will to choose—James 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:6, 8–9; Gen. 2:16–17; Deut. 30:15, 19–20; Josh. 24:14–15, 20; Heb. 11:24–26; John 7:17; Phil. 2:12–13; cf. S. of S. 1:4a

James 4:7b Withstand the devil, and he will flee from you.

Deut. 30:19–20 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today; I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, you and your seed may live.

Josh. 24:15b As for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah.

- A. Without a trained will, the training of the conscience has little use
- B. Without a trained will, a vessel is useless in God's hand
- C. Training the will requires much wisdom and exercise before the Lord

VIII. Training their character for the shaping of their vessel—Acts 7:22; Phil. 3:4–6

IX. Training the body to be healthy and fit to be useful in their service to God—1 Cor. 6:19–20; 1 Tim. 4:8; 1 Cor. 6:13; 3 John 2

Additional Resources

Children and Students class from the FTTA - 31 recorded messages

H. Clay Trumbull, [*Hints on Child Training*](#) (new edition).

Witness Lee, [*Raising Up the Next Generation for the Church Life*](#).

Witness Lee, [*Character*](#).

Durbin, Kara G., [*Parenting with Scripture*](#).

Secular resources for character training (books, etc.)