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THEY MUST BE TRAINED
By Daniel Stafford

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INTRODUCTION

There are so many endeavors that are good; there are a few endeavors that are very good, but whether good or very good they are not the best. This is the sad commentary of the life of the majority of Christians.

Being Christians they were made anew by the work of the Holy Spirit; and they desire to do the will of God and see His kingdom grow. Because of their efforts the kingdom does advance. However, so very few have the proper priorities for their endeavors.

The greatest endeavor that anyone could have is to properly train a child. Men that can be senators, vice presidents and presidents of this great country can't do that. Men that can be educators, bishops and superintendents of churches can't do that.

One of the most heart rending laments that I have faced came from the lips of evangelists. They said, "while I was out trying to save others I lost my own." This is the one lament that I dread to make more than any I could think of. This is the one lament that I pray that I do not have to make.

It might be too late for many of us to train the child; all we can do now is pray that God will work a miracle in his or her life. If we do have the time to train, may we put the time to it's best use.

Daniel Stafford
March 1975

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01 -- CHILDREN MUST BE TRAINED

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

The ultimate downfall of any nation is the failure of properly training the children. Many people would not give this any serious thought. Historians have never given this as a reason why one civilization after another has gone plunging into the fate of the ruined and forgotten. History, although it does not take into recognition the fact of the failure, has shown over and over that one nation after another has gone plunging down because they failed to train up the children in the way they should go.

As this is true of a nation, it is equally true of any church or any home. If we could see as God can see we would see that one church after another came to the fore-front, and for awhile, seemingly, they were a spiritual force and were instrumental in the hands of God, and were used of God for the cause of righteousness. But instead of the parents taking the admonition of God seriously and spending the proper time and effort to train the children, they went on assuming that because they believed it that, naturally, their children would believe it. Time has proven that the children did not follow in the steps of the parents; and it was not long until the church went down as a spiritual force and became little more than a glorified club.

This has also been true of the vast majority of homes: both the home of the sinners and the home of those that professed various measures of grace. Here is a godly man and a godly woman; seemingly, they try to live consistent in their personal habits and actions. They assume that because they have a family altar, give testimony to the grace of God and take their children to church while they are young, this will assure the fact that their children will also be Christian.

Time has shown that this is not so. If they are not properly trained they will break the heart of the parents and bring disgrace as we are seeing all over the country today.

There is nothing that will play more into the hands of the devil than the acceptance of the idea that each child should make his own decisions. There is nothing that I can think of that would be more acceptable to the devil; and there would be nothing that he would use to destroy any nation or any church or any home more than the conception that the children are supposed to make their own decisions.

This is true today in the school system; it is true in the general conduct; and it is also true in the mind of the average parent.

The school system has somehow been diverted from reality. Some that claim to be intelligent they are, actually, mentally deranged; for the results have proven this conclusively and have taken over our school systems. While we tax payers continue to pay more and more into our school systems they continue to blight our children. The leaders of the schools have injected the theory that children are not to be disciplined; they are not to be regimented; they are not to be told what to study and what not to study; but they are to be given a free wide range so they can determine what they desire to study. No wonder our school system is costing us more today than it has ever cost in the history of the world; and, yet, it is doing the poorest work. This is being voiced all over the United States today. Many in the fifth and sixth grade cannot read or write. We are turning people out from our universities with degrees that have hardly any knowledge. Their ignorance is amazing; and it has been brought about by this conception that children are to make their own decisions.

It seems that the actions of the average person have gone to the lowest level in the history of the country. And it was brought about by this deadly conception that they are to make their own decisions. Never has there been a day when people were so brazen as they are today. Adultery has lost its stigma in the minds of the people. Instead of people being ashamed of it and only speaking of it in hushed tones, they loudly proclaim that it is the accepted way of life today. Divorcees can run around from one mate to another; but instead of people recoiling from them as they would from a deadly animal, and one that could pollute their children and community they, seemingly, just smile their approval. There was a day in my life time when children would come into the yard if a divorced person walked down the sidewalk by their yard. However, this is not so today: today the institution of marriage is being questioned in "educated circles". Our nation is fast becoming a mongrel nation.

People can use dope and drink whiskey; most of our legislators are drunkards or, at least, they are at home at a cocktail party. Many have drinking problems: the very fact that they will take one drink is too much, but they drink to an excess. And, yet, time after time they are voted back into their offices. It seems like we have allowed the action of the individual to be determined by his own decision. The word of God has no authority: what the church once stood for has no authority, now, each individual is a law unto himself. His thinking becomes the supreme court, and if he says I believe it is alright or I desire to do it; that gives him license to engage in the things he desires to do.

In the world, and even in the Church, the parents have come to this false thinking. I must not force my standards and ideas upon them. I must not force moral standards; but I must allow them to come to their own decision. This false theory is not only contrary to the word of God; but it is also contrary to common sense and consistency. They did not take this idea when the child needed medicine. No wonder the home is disrupted; no wonder the younger people have turned against the older people; no wonder we have the generation gap because the older people have failed to train them in the way they should go.

This conception has produced a nation that is reeling like a drunken man. Everyone admits that things are wrong; however, the majority are blind to the reason why things are in such a pitiful condition. Today the nation that has become the envy of the world in material wealth and technical knowledge is tottering on the brink of moral decay. America that, seemingly, through the years has been invincible from without is decaying from within. A lot of people falsely assume that she will come to some magical formula and she will come out of it. However, America will not come out of it; she is doomed to fall; and the reason why she is falling is because parents did not train their children in the way they should go.

All the intelligentsia freely admit that something is radically wrong. Everyone that talks about the matter say they have never seen a situation like we are faced with today. We now realize that we have come to a point until it is not safe to walk on the street; it is not safe to try to carry on normal business and pleasure. If you have any possession of value you must hide it from other eyes because they may be envious and take it either by force or deception.

The majority of people, seemingly, cannot see what has happened. And the most educated, both in the world and in the church, are the most blind to the evident fact. The people with their Ph.D. degrees are, seemingly, the most ignorant people to reality that we have today. They will talk and give this theory and that theory, and they will delve into many theories; but they can't come face to face with reality. They will skirt around the edge, over and over, saying this makes a contribution and this has a reaction; but they won't come face to face with the real reason we are in the precarious condition that we are in. **IT IS BECAUSE WE HAVE PRODUCED UNTRAINED CHILDREN.** These children have now grown to where they have reached the state of maturity, at least by years, and they have become a menace to our society and our way of living.

It is not optional that we train the children; it is an absolute requisite that we train them or be destroyed by them. Oh! if people could only come face to face with this grim reality. If we do not train the children, the children will become the terrors, and will become the very monsters that will destroy us.

Little wonder the Bible speaks of "a man's foes shall be they of his own household." The most destructive force we will have to face as a nation will be children that we did not train. No wonder they are living like hippies; no wonder they are, promiscuously, having sexual relations with anyone that can stir their passion; no wonder they are living like brute beasts. We did not train them in the way of **PURITY, MODESTY and DECENCY**; and now we are reaping the results of our failure to train them. They will be the ones that will close our churches and destroy our very way of living and existence unless something is done, and done quickly.

We will have to give an account unto God for our failure to train them. Personally, this is what I fear more than anything else about coming into the presence of God. I fear more when I shall have to give an account of how I trained my children. I thank God for every effort that I put forth. I thank God for every word I ever spoke. I thank God for every thing that I ever tried. I wish that I could have been more efficient, I wish that I had been better equipped, many a time, to give them a better answer than I did; but, oh, I am so glad for every effort that I did make. I am also, fearfully, afraid that I did not spend enough time; I was not diligent enough to ingrain into their thinking the spiritual truths, so that they could not get away from them. If God could only help us to see what it will be when all the things we were so busy about have lost their significance. When God has only one question to confront us with, "Why did you NOT train your children?" What will be our answer?

The scripture tells us, clearly, that the child must be trained. The question may come to the mind, "but how should they be trained?" They are to be trained in the way they should go. In order for us to train a child in the way that he should go it would have to involve at least three things. Per chance it would involve many more, but, at least, the outer edge of the involvement would be covered in three things. These are the three things that we want to notice now.

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02 -- TRAIN THE CHILD IN THE WAY HE SHOULD GO

Adam Clarke has a very descriptive explanation of the word train. He says, "Train up a child in the way he should go." The Hebrew of this clause is curious: chanock lannaar al pi darco, "Initiate the child at the opening, the mouth of his path." When he comes to the opening of the way of life, being able to walk alone, and to choose; stop at this entrance, and begin a series of instructions, how he is to conduct himself in every step he takes. Show him the duties, the dangers, and how to secure the blessings which all lie before him. Fix these on his mind by daily inculcation, till their impression is become indelible, then lead him to practice by slow and almost imperceptible degrees, till each indelible impression becomes a strongly radicated habit. Beg incessantly the blessing of God on all this teaching and discipline; and then you have obeyed the injunction of the wisest of men. Nor is there any likelihood that such impressions shall ever be effaced, or that such habits shall ever be destroyed." (There are so many that want to believe that they trained their children, but how few could meet this definition?)

Anything that has importance takes training, whether it be a musician, singer, doctor, lawyer or soldier. The more important the occupation the greater is the need for training. One is really moved when he reads about the long persistent discipline training that some individuals had to take in order to master the things in which they were engaged.

I heard about Fritz Chrysler, the great violinist, He said if he missed one day of practicing he would know it: if he missed two days his friends would know it; and if he missed three days the audience would know it. He had to stay, faithfully, at the job in order to train himself to be the master of the violin that he became. We hear about the doctors, how they have to study long, arduous hours in order to become the skilled physicians or surgeons. And so it is with every field of life. Anything that has importance takes training. Even a show dog has to be trained. He does

not just automatically or by a quirk of fate, acquire his abilities and tricks. He has to be taught and, diligently trained; and so it is with a child, he must also be trained.

No child will automatically acquire the training that they need. No child will just pick up the proper habits, the proper mannerisms and the proper values. He must be trained: these things must be instilled within him, so deeply, until they cannot be forgotten.

The most important thing that ever happened to any child is to be trained in "the way" he should go. Many things may come into the life of an individual that may seem so important and so exciting; but, there will never be anything more important than to be trained in "the way" he should go. This training will reap eternal dividends long after all material wealth and fame has been long forgotten.

One may acquire much of this world's goods and one for awhile, may be up in the front and acclaimed by the world; but it is amazing how quickly these things fade into insignificance, once that individual has crossed the divide of worlds. People that were once so famous and their name was a household word: it was in the newspaper and on the news media nearly daily; but not long after they had passed across the divide of worlds, their place was taken by someone else. Soon, the things that seemed so important for the moment were forgotten.

Now we are reading in the news about the inheritance that the Kennedy children will receive from their step father, Onassis. Some say that both of the Kennedy children will receive an inheritance of fifteen million dollars. That is more money than they will probably ever spend. Already, they have a tremendous inheritance coming from their father, the late president of the United States, and the great Kennedy fortunes. Now then, added to that is this extra inheritance that comes from their step father. However, as quickly as life's little day has passed for the Kennedy children, their money will be left for someone else and it will lose its importance. This is not so with the training in "the way" that a child should go. Long after the material wealth and fame have been forgotten, there will be eternal dividends that will be reaped by any child that has been trained in "the way" that he should go.

"The way" is the way of the Lord; it is the way that leads to heaven. It is the way that sinners and backsliders do not walk; so one can see this is a very exclusive way. There are very few people that are going to walk in "the way". Jesus made it plain that many would seek to enter in; but He said, "few there be that find it." There are few children that are properly trained by their parents; there are few children that will ever meet all of God's demands and walk in "the way". But those few children are headed toward the eternal city.

"The way" is the way that the sinner and the backslider do not walk: so if one is going to walk in "the way" he will have to accept the fact that it is going to be a separated way. It will be a way that will be separate from the way of the crowd; it will be a way that will be contrary and different from the average individual, even to the professors of grace. Most people will never walk in "the way". Therefore, if a person is going to walk in "the way" he must be trained at an early age that he must, willfully, separate himself from those that are not walking in "the way". He must be willing to separate himself and to walk with God, in harmony with his will, and to be happy with the presence of the Lord instead of the presence of the multitude.

If this is trained into a child until, it becomes a part of his very make up, then that child will not turn back even though others may give up. This is why it is so very important that the child be trained in "the way" he should go. The mother of Moses was a slave; however, she so trained her boy until he made a choice of "the way" instead of the throne of Egypt. John and Charles Wesley were so trained by their mother until they were instruments in the hand of God to bring a spiritual awakening to England and America.

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03 -- TRAIN THE CHILD IN THE ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY OF THE WORD OF GOD

Satan was soundly defeated in the wilderness by the word of God. It was the word of God that Christ used to defeat the devil when he was trying to tempt Him in the wilderness. Christ would always answer the suggestions of Satan by saying, "It is written." The absolute authority of the word of God is that invincible force that will, withstand all the thrust of the enemy. Satan will do everything that he can to keep people from accepting the word of God in it's absolute authority. For such a person is so surrounded with the protection of the word of God until Satan can not defeat him.

Satan solicits everyone that he can to help him in his effort. He will use everyone possible to try to tear down the appreciation and respect, in the mind of an individual, to the authority of the word of God. He will try to inject every doubt, every question mark. He will try in ever way possible to get the individual to refuse to accept in simple child like faith the word of God as it is written.

He will use school teachers, especially in high school and college, to say that the bible is only a good piece of literature: "We cannot take it too seriously; and certainly we cannot accept it as absolute authority." We must be broad-minded and accept all religions and respect the belief of every man.

He will inspire associates to make jeering remarks at the word of God. They will make it clear by their actions, even if they do not express it in actual words, that they feel that anyone that would dare to try to fully, believe the word of God is out of step with those that are in the know. This is why parents can't be too careful about the associates with whom they allow their children to associate.

He will get preachers to delete and refuse to accept certain portions of the word of God. He will get them to try to explain away portions of the word of God by human reasoning. He will get them to try to prove their false reasoning by the fact that the majority of professed Christians do not follow the word of God in many portions.

He will get parents to live contrary to the word of God. As the human bond is a very tight bond it is only natural that the child will pattern after the parents. As the child is born with a sinful nature and desires, it would only follow that he would normally follow the wrong actions and desires of the parents. Therefore, unless a child is taught in the absolute authority of the scriptures,

he will in all probability be a prey of his parents. Satan tries in every way to keep a child from having absolute respect for the authority of the word of God. Therefore, if the child is not trained to accept the absolute authority of the word of God, there is little hope that he will walk in "the way." Unless a child is trained in the absolute authority of the word of God until he realizes that it is not just literature; it is the will of God as expressed by the Holy Spirit as He inspired men to write that will; it is God's authority and should not be questioned or denied; the child will never walk in "the way."

Every child will walk in "a way." If he is not properly trained by the parent, rest assured, he will, be trained by wrong associates, examples, teaching and preaching. This is the picture that we are seeing on every hand today! Boys and girls were not trained to walk in "the way," so they are walking in "a way," it is the way of shame, rebellion, and heartache.

Many times "a way" may have just a little truth in it. It is the subtle plan of Satan to put just a little truth in the thinking of most people. If he can take just a germ of truth and surround it by error, then gullible people will accept it and will be defeated by the multitudes. So many people are walking "a way" that has just a little truth in it: they take this little truth and make themselves believe that, surely, they are Christians and will walk in the presence of the King.

There has never been a day when the word "Christian" was so cheap as it is today. We are paying for our failure to train the children in the absolute authority of the word of God. Regardless of how far ones life is from the demands of the scriptures, if he has given a mental assent to Jesus Christ, he can call himself a Christian and expect you to do the same. Children that are born to these parents face a double deception. They are not trained to the absolute authority of the word of God, but they are trained to the deception of their parents and the like associates of the parents.

The child must be trained to the fact, that for the word of God to have absolute authority, it must take authority over the thinking of EVERYONE. It must take authority over the thinking of the crowd, friends, loved ones, preachers, and even over self. Unless this is true, no one will ever hope to carry out the admonition of the apostle Paul in Romans 3:4, "let God be true, but every man a liar."

The reason we are in the pitiful plight that we are in today is because we are living by the "crowd actions." We have not allowed the word of God to have absolute authority over the crowd. If the crowd begins to do it, seemingly, so many feel that this makes it alright. It gives them a license to do it, regardless of what the word of God has to say, and what faithful men of God have to say. To the average child, if their friends are doing it, they feel that they must do it also.

Many people will allow their loved ones to blind them to the authority of God's word. If their loved ones begin to do a certain thing or take a certain view they will follow in the same pathway.

Many individuals are bound to preachers. If the preacher has a little winsome way, a little sparkle and dynamic about him; if he says it is alright, even though the word of God says it is all

wrong, they will go the way that is prescribed by the preacher. Surely, the greatest hurdle that the word of God has, in being the absolute authority, is the views of false preachers.

So many people allow self to be the determining factor: Because their heart has never been cleansed by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, it is only natural that they would desire things different from the word of God. The very fact that they desire it, they deny the authority of God's word, and satisfy the desire of self.

For the word of God to have absolute authority it must never change. If it ever meant one thing it will always mean that same thing. The Lord is the God that changes not and His word is established. If God changes not then we can rest assured that His word changes not.

Modern advance does not apply to the word of God. It is amazing and startling the many things that have made great strides and advancement in the last fifty years. The last fifty years have been the greatest advancement of technical knowledge that the world has ever known. This modern advancement does not apply to the word of God. The word of God is not being advanced, it is not being increased, but it is being denied by this intelligent world. The word of God does not advance with years, it is established. It came from the mind of an omniscient God, a God that meant what he said and He said what he meant; therefore, whatever the word of God has ever said, it is still saying, "identically" the same thing today. That is why we read in Jeremiah 6:16, "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ASK FOR THE OLD PATHS, where is the good way, and WALK THEREIN, and ye shall find rest for your souls".

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04 -- LOYALTY TO DOCTRINE AND PRINCIPLE INSTEAD OF TO ANY CHURCH

Train the child to be loyal to sound doctrines and principles. These things will always be the same and pleasing unto God. If the parent will train the child to be loyal to Bible doctrine, principles and standards, these things will never change. The scriptures will always say the same thing, advocate the same principles and demand the same standards.

Certainly the child should be trained to love the local church and the denomination, however, this love should never reach the point of "blind loyalty." It is only natural and normal when a church is walking in harmony with the word of God, when the glory of the Lord is upon the services, when the Spirit of the Lord is dealing with hearts, that people would love that church. It is only normal that people would have a loyalty to that denomination that is helping their children make it into the City of God. Therefore, it will be the natural thing for the children to love their local church; it will be natural that the child will love the denomination. This love must not be taught to the point of "blind loyalty" until the child will be loyal to the church, when it begins to compromise, let down and deviate, instead of clinging to sound doctrine and principle. This is a point that few parents will face. The vast majority that ever face it find that they have been too successful in training a loyalty to the church, but not enough loyalty to sound doctrine and principle.

They used to sing a little song, "Once a Methodist always a Methodist." I am sure that it had a real meaning for those that were singing it in the beginning. No doubt, when the song was first written there was some glory and fire upon the services. No doubt, the writer of that song felt that this would always be true; therefore, he said, ONCE A METHODIST ALWAYS A METHODIST. However history has proven that the fire goes out, the glory departs, the succeeding leaders will deviate from the stand of the founding fathers; and the educators of the church will not be able to carry on with the same childlike faith that the founding fathers had. The longer any church has their colleges the more they want to delve into theories instead of standing firmly on Bible doctrine and principles.

A child must be trained to be loyal to sound doctrine. What ever the Bible ever says it will always say; whatever principles are fostered by the word of God will always be fostered by the word of God. Therefore, a child must be trained to be so loyal to sound doctrine and principles until he will remain true to these, even when the church he loves begins to let down.

History has proven that no spiritual awakening has remained in it's original purity over forty years. How sad whatever church you take your children to when they are small will not be the same when they are forty. This is a sad truth, but it is a truth that cannot be denied unless one desires to be willfully ignorant of facts. I well remember when I heard the General Superintendent, under whom I was ordained, make this statement. I was startled when Dr. H. V. Miller made it; but time and the scriptures, have proven to me that certainly his words were true. The church that we read about in Acts was in a state of spiritual deterioration in thirty two years after Pentecost. No, they had not repudiated everything, but they were on the way down.

It will always bring a tinge of sadness when people open their eyes and face up to reality. It makes no difference what church you take your children to when they are small, that church will not still be spiritual in the same measure when the children are forty years old. Every church would like to refute this, but history has shown that it has never been successfully refuted.

May I venture a word of warning? We are living in a day when so many people, out of good conscience, could not carry on with their former associates. They have had to organize a new group, or they have had to go with some other group. I have no criticism for their move, but I would like to post each one. The church that you have organized, or the church you are uniting with now, will not remain true over forty years. In forty years or less they, too, will compromise, they too, will let down and they too, will change their views. No church has ever avoided this, but every church has fallen into step with this sad pattern This is why we must train the children to have loyalty to sound doctrine and principles instead of a "blind loyalty" to any church. Churches do not hold their original purity; but the word of God is steadfast and sure.

If you train a child to "blind loyalty" to a church, the church that helped to start them will be the church that will help them to compromise and lose out when they are in middle life. This is a heart breaking statement for one to have to make, but it is one that one will have to admit unless he wants to depart, completely from f acts. The very church that helped an individual to start out in the tender years is the very church that will help that individual to compromise and deviate in their mature years, if they form a "blind loyalty" to that church. This is the very situation that I am facing today. This is the same situation that many have been brought face to face with and,

seemingly, they did not know how to cope with it. There was a day when they urged their children to go to church; there was a day when they urged the children to be loyal to the standards that were advocated by the church; there was a day when they urged the children to be true to the doctrine that was advocated by the church; but now that the years have mounted up, the same church is trying to refute the standards it once held. The same church is trying to explain away some of the things that they were so definite and clear on when first the child began. The same church has just about demanded that people will be loyal to it, even if they have to change their views, their convictions, lower their standards, and engage in things they have a conviction against. You have to get into step with the church, even if you have to be out of step with the word of God and the Holy Spirit, if you are going to be accepted and smiled upon.

Personally, I find that the price that is demanded to be smiled upon by a church that is departing from the original doctrine and standards is entirely too high for me to try to pay. I have no "blind loyalty" to any church. My supreme loyalty is to the Christ that saved me when I was deep in sin, and to His word that has directed my steps for over thirty years. When denominations have passed into oblivion, Christ will still be the adored one of the redeemed. By His grace I want to be one of the white robed ones that will continually shout His praises.

Along side my desire to make it to heaven myself, I sincerely desire for my children to make it also. How I wish that I had known the things I have tried to put into this little book when first I started to train my children. Yes, I would have been more faithful at the task. Yes, I would have given more time to the task. Many of those things that I thought so important at the time, do not seem near so important now that I am thirty years removed from them. It is too late for me to try to turn the clock back. I had my opportunity; this, is also true with so many others that have a generous portion of gray on their heads.

My only hope is that this little book will fall into the hands of those that are still young. Into the hands of those that are now holding a little bundle from heaven in their arms; or they are living in the expectancy of that moment. If you will begin now, and never deviate from the task, you will be so thankful that you carried out the admonition, "TRAIN UP A CHILD IN THE WAY HE SHOULD GO: AND WHEN HE IS OLD HE WILL NOT DEPART FROM IT."

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THE END