

"HEAR YE HIM"

A Devotional Series For Radio

This sermon script is furnished with
the good wishes of the Reorganized Church
of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

World Headquarters: The Auditorium, Independence, Missouri

Program Number 231

Evan A. Fry, Radio Minister
All Rights Reserved

The Sermon: TEACH YOUR CHILDREN

Scripture: Book of Mormon, Mosiah 2:22-27. (King Benjamin has just exhorted his people to believe in God with faith, to repent, to humble themselves before God, to call on his name daily, and he continues:) If ye do this, ye shall always rejoice, and be filled with the love of God, and always retain a remission of your sins; And ye shall grow in the knowledge of him that created you, or in the knowledge of that which is just and true. And ye will not have a mind to injure one another, but to live peaceably, and to render to every man according to that which is his due. And ye will not suffer your children, that they go hungry, or naked; Neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another, and serve the devil, who is the master of sin, or who is the evil spirit which hath been spoken of by our fathers; he being an enemy to all righteousness; But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another.

Bring up your children in light and truth.

Society almost universally recognizes the moral obligation of parents to provide for the physical needs of their children -- for food, clothing, shelter, cleanliness, and physical care. This moral obligation is given legal status in most civilized countries by laws which provide penalties for child abandonment, child neglect, or in the case of a father particularly, non-support. All children are assumed to have legal and moral claim upon their parents for the physical necessities of life until they reach an age where they are able to provide for themselves.

Normally good parents also recognize that they have other responsibilities to their children. As soon as a baby learns to crawl -- or sometimes even before -- he needs to be carefully guarded against and later (as he is able to understand) taught and warned against the dangers of such things as heat and fire and open flame, sharp-edged or pointed tools and instruments, dangerous household poisons, open stairs or other places that might invite a fall, moving machinery, disease germs and dirt, street traffic, and many other natural hazards which adults take as a matter of course but about which infants and children know little or nothing.

As a little later stage in the child's development, it is the responsibility of parents to teach him the things

he needs to know for survival in a dangerous and complicated world. The child needs to be taught in the basic information that will enable him to take his place in society, to earn his own livelihood, and to live a productive and worthwhile life. This, too, is primarily a parental responsibility. Parents delegate some of this responsibility to teachers and schools, but in the last analysis it is the parents who are responsible for the schools. It is parents, who as citizens organize themselves into governmental units, levy taxes, and with those taxes build and support schools. Without parents there would be no schools.

In general there are only two ways in which a child can learn. One is by experience; the other is by accepting and applying the experience of others who have lived before him. Learning by experience can be very costly and dangerous. An infant who has to experiment with fire or sharp knives to learn that fire burns and knives cut may seriously injure or even destroy himself in the learning process. Since it is the moral responsibility of the parent to protect the child from danger, it is consequently the moral responsibility of the parent to sidetrack the painful process of learning by experience, by providing means for transmitting past experience through teaching. Each generation can spare the following generations much wasted effort, lost

time, and suffering, by recording its experience and the results of that experience. Each generation can then learn from and profit by all the experience of every generation which has gone before. Each new generation is spared a great deal of inconvenience and suffering, and relieved of the necessity of making a fresh start from the beginning.

There are certain dangers to be warned against, and certain practical experiences to be taught and transmitted to each new generation, in the spiritual and moral realm, as well as in the physical and practical. There are certain dangers inherent in human nature, if it is not brought under control of the mind and spirit. Fallen man is by nature carnal, sensual, and devilish; but that is only one side of the story. He is also created in the image of God --a little lower than the angels. Children need to be taught and warned against the dangers of giving way to the evil impulses of the fallen nature. Even in their innocence and purity, they need to be taught and warned of the dangerous and destructive qualities of sin, for the tendency to sin is born into every son and daughter of Adam, along with the qualities and capacities of godliness.

Little children are innocent. Because of their ignorance, their immaturity, their lack of experience, they can not be held accountable before God or before man for yielding to the urges of their fallen nature. If a small child steals, or lies, or flies into a rage when he can't have his own way, we don't put him in jail; we guide and teach him that it is better and more satisfying to be honest, truthful, and self-controlled. As children grow out of the years of innocence, and begin to be accountable for their own sins, they need to be taught of the need for a Savior. They need to be told of the love of God, and the saving mission of Jesus Christ, his Son. They need to be taught of the means provided for personal regeneration and redemption, by parents who have themselves experienced those results and demonstrated them in their own lives. They need to be made aware of the power which is available through Christ with which to resist sin and overcome the downward pull of their fallen nature. They need to be taught the destructive and disintegrating effects of anger, hatred, resentment, cruelty, jealousy, dishonesty, theft, lust, hypocrisy, and pride, and the benefits and blessings of love, faith, virtue, truth, justice, mercy, patience, humility, temperance, and brotherly kindness. They need to be

taught the necessity for a continuing process of repentance; they need to be taught how to pray, and how to experience the power and the release that prayer will bring.

Parental responsibility for this kind of teaching is just as definite and just as real as responsibility for children's physical needs. Our Book of Mormon scripture places the two responsibilities on an equal plane. Good parents do not suffer their children to go hungry or cold or naked; "neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel with one another, and serve the devil, who is the master of sinbut ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness, and ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another."

Sometimes accidents will happen. Unforeseen events sometimes harm our children in spite of our best planning and precautions and care. But if parents are criminally negligent, careless, and unconcerned about the dangers which threaten their small children, if they fail to warn and protect them with every possible precaution, and the child is seriously injured or killed, there is a very serious responsibility devolving upon the parents. Similarly, if the parents are negligent, unconcerned and careless about their responsibility of giving moral and spiritual protection and warning, and the child falls into a life of degradation, sin, and shame, responsibility for the sins of the children will fall upon the heads of the parents. Of course there will always be some children who reject the counsel of their parents, who refuse to heed their warnings, and who use their God-given agency to choose evil even after they have been taught the good. If the parents have done their best, the responsibility is not theirs, but the child's.

Children are a stewardship from God. Parents will be held accountable in the day of judgment for the way they have administered that stewardship. We have been commanded to teach our children, to bring them up in light and truth, and not to suffer them while under our direction and control to transgress the laws of God. Many parents today need to be awakened to these responsibilities for their children's moral and spiritual welfare, as well as their physical welfare; for it seems obvious that if we did not have so many parents who were delinquent in this regard, we should not have so many so-called delinquent children.