

# What Do I Owe My Children?

No. 21

## Introduction.

- I. Once time a **father stood before the nursery of a large hospital** and looked through the glass partition at his little boy. As he gazed through the glass, he prayed, “God, help me realize that this is not just a mouth to feed but a living soul to train.”
- II. I wish that every father and mother had the attitude of this father.
  - A. Too often many fathers and mothers feel they have met their responsibility to their children simply by bring them into the world and providing for their physical needs.
  - B. This s a great, tremendous responsibility, but there is far more to parenthood than providing for the physical side of life.
- III. I would like for us to consider the question, “What Do I Owe My Children?” This is a question every parent needs to seriously and prayerfully mediate upon. The salvation of our children will likely depend on our answer and response to it.
  - I. **Childhood** - In the first place, parents owe their children childhood.
    - A. This probably sounds like a strange statement, but it is my firm conviction that in this rush, rush, society that many parents are cheating their children of childhood.
      1. In our accelerated society boys and girls are often dating by the time they are 13 or 14, and married by the time they are 15 or 16 and sometimes divorced by 17 or 18.
      2. Listen to some of the advertisements that have appeared in the newspapers and magazines.

“Why don’t you buy a little diamond ring for your best girl and show her you really care. The price is \$15.98.”

**Here is another advertisement that appeared for little girls.**

“Give your little princess a thrill she will never forget - the fashion wig will change her personality. As a blond, she is breathtaking; as a brunette, delicious; as a redhead, stunning; she will enjoy being the center of attention at all the little parties as she flaunts her new coiffure. The wig stays on without pins; will fit any little girl from three to nine years of age; made of vinyl; looks like real hair; the price..only \$3.98 plus postage.”
    - B. This hurried attitude of society is **robbing children of the rich and happy experience** of childhood.
      1. It is also **accelerating children into situations** that they do not have the maturity and wisdom to handle.

2. This is also a reason for the **crime wave** in our country. It used to be a thrill for a young to go to town to see a movie, but today most children have done about everything there is to do by the time they are 14 or 15. Then they seek to find new thrills in drugs, alcohol, pre-marital sex, vandalism, theft, and through any other way they can find it.
3. I am not encouraging perpetual childhood, but let's not push our children too quickly. We should let them enjoy the pleasures of being little girls and boys.

## II. **Love And Discipline** - In the second place, parents owe their children love and discipline.

A. **As parents we cannot love our children too much.** Our children need all the love and affection we can give them. We should not miss a day that we do not express to our children our love for them in words and by our actions. We should not be afraid or ashamed to put our arms around our children, regardless of their age, and say to them, "I love you. You are important and precious to me." It will be a blessing to us and to our children.

B. Our children also **need discipline.**

1. In this modern age too many parents tie up the dog at night and let the children run loose.
2. The Bible does not teach this modernistic philosophy. (Prov. 13:24; 22:15; 29:15; Eph. 6:4).
  - a. One time a **group of college students** were asked, "What do you feel is the most alarming moral problem that faces America?" The answered the first major problem was drinking. They said the second major problem was the "utter lack of discipline" of parents. They felt that many parents are so caught up in the word that they didn't really care what their children did.
  - b. **A girl was once asked if she resented the discipline of her parents.** She answered, "No, I loved it." The girl expressed the view of most teenagers. Children not only need discipline, but deep down inside they want it. They know that discipline shows that their parents care what happens to them.

## III. **Warm, Peaceful, Atmosphere** - In the third place, parents owe their children a **warm, peaceful, atmosphere.**

A. **A mother once screamed at her children to stop quarreling.** One of the children replied, "We are not quarreling, we are playing mom and pop."

B. This story has a bit of humor to it, but it is not humorous to live in a home where there is continual strife.

1. Many children are emotional wrecks and scarred for life because their parents fuss and fight continually.
2. Many children have been heard to say that if hell is worse than my home it must be a terrible place. Hell is a terrible place, but so is a home without the peace of Christ. Parents who habitually fuss are destroying their most precious possessions - their children.

## IV. **Teaching** - In the fourth place, parents owe their children teaching.

A. Listen to the words given to the children of Israel. (Deut. 6:4-9).

**Deut 6:4 "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!**

**Deut 6:5 "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.**

**Deut 6:6 "And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart;**

**Deut 6:7 and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk 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.**

**Deut 6:8 "And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead.**

**Deut 6:9 "And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.**

1. Proverbs 22:6

2. Ephesians 6:1-4.

B. Parents have the great and awesome responsibility to teach their children to love God and keep His commandments.

1. Parents also have the responsibility to teach their children to **work** and **respect authority**.

2. They have the responsibility to teach their children **a proper scale of values**.

a. Some time ago I read about a **little boy whose father was in the Air Force** and had been transferred from base to base so often that the boy had rarely completed one year at the same school. When word came that he must check out of school before the end of the term the boy was saddened to leave his friends. One of his young friends said, "It is too bad you don't have a home." The little fellow replied, "Oh, we have a home, all right. We just don't have a house to put it in."

b. This little boy understood more about the nature of a home than most older people. A home is not a house, but it is a loving, harmonious relationship between the members of the family. It is a place where love, peace, contentment, and respect for God and one another abides.

c. Let's teach our children what a home really is that they may find a true home in life.

V. **A Godly Example** - In the fifth place, parents owe their children a godly example.

A. Years ago Isaiah asked king Hezekiah, "What have they seen in thine house?" What a powerful question.

B. This question is a practical one for parents in every age to raise. Parents should ask, "What kind of example have we set for our children?" Do our children see us pray and read the Bible? Do they see us at Bible study and church? Do they see us serving Christ? Do they see Christ living in us?

1. **A 16 year old boy once decided to quit church services.** His explanation was, "My parents have attended church for 40 years, and it has not done much for them, so why should I continue?" I hope our children cannot say that about us.

2. On one occasion **2 little cousins were talking about the spiritual conditions of their fathers.** One said to the other, "Mike, our daddies are going to hell." Mike said, "If my daddy goes to

hell, I want to go with him.” He didn’t know what hell was like, but he wanted to go there if his daddy did. Fathers and mothers should really think about this matter. Our children will almost without exception follow in our footsteps. They will do as we do.

3. He whipped his boy for lying,  
And his cheeks were flaming red,  
And of course there’s no denying  
There was much truth in what he said—  
That a liar’s always hated.  
But the little fellow knew  
That his father often stated  
Many things that are untrue.

He caught the youngster cheating  
And he sent him up to bed,  
And it’s useless now repeating  
All the bitter things he said;  
He talked of honor loudly,  
As a lesson to be learned,  
And forgot he’s boasted proudly  
Of the currish tricks he’s turned.

He heard the youngster swearing  
And he punished him again—  
He’d have no boy as daring  
As to utter words profane.  
Yet the youngster could have told him,  
Poor misguided little elf,  
That it seemed unfair to scold him  
When he often curses, himself.

All in vain is splendid preaching,  
And the noble things we say,  
All our task is wasted teaching  
If we do not lead the way.  
We can never, by reviewing  
All the sermons on the shelves,  
Keep the younger hands from doing  
What we often do ourselves.

C. This poem shows the best way to teach our children is by example.

1. It is unthinkable and naive to expect our children to take our advice and ignore our example. If we want our children to be faithful Christians, we must be faithful Christians ourselves and reflect Christ every day in our lives.
2. **Abraham Lincoln** said, “There is just one way to bring up a child in the way he should go and that is to travel in that way yourself.

### Conclusion.

- I. I would like to ask you a very **personal question**. Where are you leading your children? Are you leading them to heaven or hell? If you are not leading them to heaven, why not change your life and let Christ dwell in your heart?
- II. If you are not a Christian, we urge you to submit your life to Christ. Step out into the aisle and come and give your life to the Savior. You need Christ and the salvation he offers. Your children need him and your godly example. Will you come as we stand and sing?