

June 3, 2007 PM

**BEARING THE DIVINE IMAGE IN THE HOME:
FRUITFUL MULTIPLICATION::
THE GENDER-SPECIFIC GOALS OF CHILD-REARING (PART 1)
PROVERBS 4**

2. GENDER-SPECIFIC GOALS

Preliminary remarks: (1) The goal is independence.

“Independence” involves a child becoming an adult who is self-disciplined and self-supporting.

Your relationship with your child moves from complete dependence in early stages to independence when adult. This happens in stages that need to be recognized.

Your child must learn to take responsibility and make wise decisions. Parents who insist on complete dependence keep the child a “baby” all his life. This can take the form of either harsh totalitarianism/legalism or indulging the child in just about anything that he wants. Whether it is totalitarianism or indulgence, the goal is the same for this parent: keep the child completely dependent upon you.

(2) Parents as husband and wife - husband-wife relationship is primary. That does not change in principle when children come.

How you relate to one another as husband and wife has as much to do with the training of your child as does what you verbally instruct your child to do or how you correct his misbehavior. They are learning how to be men and women from you.

This is saying much more than “parents *be* their role models.” It is not saying *less* than that, but it is saying much more than that. Parents, you are the role models. They will imitate you for good or ill.

Created as a boy or as a girl in the image of God, your children were created with some pre-ordained dispositions and particular tasks. In order for them to grow to be the image-bearers they have been called to be, as parents, we must shape them, mold them and train them to be what they have been created and redeemed to be.

Sin makes this difficult. Your child is a sinner. He is conceived in sin. He has a bent toward sin. And this means he is going to buck against being conformed to God’s image. Cf. **Pr 22:15**

A. BOYS TO MEN

The man was created to rule, to lead. What little boys need to be taught to do is how to do this in reflection of God’s image. They must grow up into this responsibility. They must learn what headship looks like.

1. REARING A PRIEST

The tabernacle/temple was God’s palace. And the priests were attendants in the royal palace. The priests had three major responsibilities: (1) guard the house, (2) cleanse/sanctify the house and (3) maintain the house.

Man as priest relates to all of “God’s house” and, thus extend to every area of a man’s life. Cf. Adam and the Garden.

(1) the young man is to learn what it means to *guard God’s house*.

Parents are to be *developing in the young man firm biblical convictions*. He needs to know what the world is supposed to look like. Who is good. Who is evil. If he doesn’t know these two things, there is no way he can guard the house.

He is to learn to *guard is own heart* (cf. **Pr 4:23**). Out of the heart flow all the issues of life. He must learn to guard himself through spiritual disciplines, employing God’s means of grace.

He must also learn *discernment* between what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. This is not necessarily the same distinction as “good and evil.” This deals with principles of wisdom.

(2) Cleansing the house: needs to learn how to deal with *personal sin*. He learn to deal with *sin in relationships*. He needs to learn how to cleanse the relationship of bitterness and resentment. He needs to learn repentance, restitution and reconciliation. He must also learn to deal with *sin in the church*. He needs to understand *that* the church must discipline sin and *when* the church must

discipline sin. He must learn how to deal with *sin in the world*. He must learn to confront sin appropriately. Our sons must learn how to act as priests to see the world cleansed from sin through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Our sons be taught to live *sacrificially*. He must learn to give himself to and for others.

(3) Maintaining the house (only part of which is cleansing).

Sons must learn what it means *to walk consistently and faithfully with God*. They must learn that sometimes you have to do things that you do not want to do simply for the reason that it is the right thing to do.

2. REARING A KING

(1) King as shepherd. He provides, leads, protects and delivers. Learn a *vocation* so that he may provide for himself and his family. He must also learn to *lead*. He must learn how to be out in front and bold (which, by the way, doesn't always mean loud and obnoxious). He must not learn that he can be a coward and still be considered a faithful shepherd. Rearing a king also means that you must teach your son to *protect and deliver* those under his care. This means that your son must learn to be a warrior.

(2) King as temple-builders. Our sons must learn what it means to build God's house in this world. They must grow to be men who know how to care for their wives (their temples, so to speak) as well as see God's kingdom advance in this world. They must learn to build their own "houses" to be God's house. In this they are being faithful kings.

(3) Kings as judges. They must learn *how to handle authority*. This means that as your son goes through each stage of development, he must be given authority appropriate for his age. As a good king/judge he must learn *humility* ... something with which men have a terrible fight. He must learn about *delayed gratification*. He must learn that you must be a prince before you can handle being a king. He must learn that he cannot live like he is fifty when he is twenty.

As kings boys are taking dominion. And there are two general personality-types in regard to taking dominion: (1) the aggressive and (2) the cautious. Both must learn the weaknesses of their approaches and correct them but utilize the strengths.

3. REARING A PROPHET

A *prophet* is one who *stands in the council of God, knows what God knows, and then goes to stand before men, proclaiming God's truth to men, applying the knowledge of God in word and deed. A prophet, when standing in the council of God intercedes for others there.*

E.g., Moses, **Deut 34:10-12**. Coming Messiah would be a prophet like Moses, cf. **Deut 18:15-19**

Our sons are to be trained up to prophet status. We do that by teaching them (1) stand in the council of God, hearing his word and interceding for others, and (2) applying that knowledge in word and deed, speech and act.

Instruction: Cf. **Deut 6:7**, *teach diligently*. Verb has to do with "whetting" or "sharpening." But then, "... 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."

Your young prophets not only need to learn the substance of God's word (which, of course, is vitally important). They also need to know *how* they are to instruct in God's word. And they learn that from their parents, and primarily their fathers.

Parental perseverance and diligence is a must for training up good prophets. You must *make* the time and *take* the effort. In doing this you are also modeling before them what a prophet is to be doing: persevering and being diligent.

Enacting God's word means that you are living consistently with what you are teaching your sons. In this you are showing them that a prophet is only fulfilling his office properly if he is not being hypocritical. Or, to put it positively, if he is being faithful.

This means that our sons are to be making the connections between what is taught and how they are to act.

Must also learn to *pray*, especially in intercession for others. They will learn this through the liturgy each week, but also as it is done at home.