

“Except the LORD built the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep. Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.” Psalm 127

Children are such a precious gift from GOD! They can be the most wonderful blessing at the same time they are being very stubborn and difficult. There are so many good, godly qualities we gain from our training of them, patience, love, kindness, perseverance, forgiveness and many, many more.

Many times the frustrations and anger we develop over our children is our own doing. We often do not take the time to **plan** the training of our children. When we stand before the Father on judgment day, if He accuses us of ‘parenting on purpose’ we want to be able to plead guilty! As a mother that takes planning ways to teach and train our young ones the things they need to know about GOD and how to please Him. It is not likely to happen accidentally.

Planning may occasionally include signing them up to play ball on a team, but it is certainly not required. Having our children involved in every activity we can afford is not good for them, for us, or for family life. That requires so much business, running here and there, following someone else’s schedule and often at ‘breakneck speed.’ There is little or no time for relaxing, enjoying one another or sharing the natural teaching times that comes from living everyday life. Some times we allow the world to trick us into believing in the way they do things. We must consider what the LORD would want us to do. Do you find yourself saying, “that would be nice but I just don’t have the time in my schedule”? If our excuses for not participating in activities of the church often begin with, “our son has ball practice that day” or “our daughter is taking piano at that time” maybe we should stop and take a good look at our priorities. What is the ultimate goal you want to achieve for your children? Will practicing ball or taking lessons help them reach that goal? There is nothing wrong with children participating in activities that are good and right within themselves, unless those activities take too much time, money and energy away from their spiritual growth.

Another way we frustrate ourselves is by setting ourselves up to fail. The yard needs the leaves to be raked, so you decide this will be a good activity to do as a family. Maybe you forget you had promised your son or daughter they could have a friend over. You just know the leaves need raked and you need help. It is Saturday and you want it done today. What is most likely to be the reaction of your children in this situation? Unless they are truly saints, they probably are going to complain, whine and revolt at having to rake leaves today. If you press the point how many leaves will you actually get help with? How much time might be wasted fussing and correcting your children? What kind of atmosphere will you likely have at supertime? Are the answers to the questions in this paragraph to your liking? If not how could they be changed? We create a ‘situation’ when we promise a day of fun with their friends and then remember there is work that needs to be done. Maybe we should have thought of the leaves before promising a visit from friends OR maybe we could plan a way to make it a fun day and include the friends in the raking of leaves in the morning and other activities in the afternoon.

See now we are ‘planning our parenting.’ We are thinking ahead of time how to accomplish a job. This does not mean that your children are going to always enjoy everything you want them to do. And of course we have to teach them to have a good work ethic. But there are ways to approach this situation that will bring about less chaos and more together time. Maybe your response is, “I don’t have time to plan everything.” Ask yourself why not? Is it because of scheduling like we mentioned above? Maybe you just need a little organization. Maybe we are spending our time trying to do it all by ourselves. Lets keep Psalm 127 in mind, “Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it...It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows:”

Surely the souls of our children are worth the effort to do it GOD’s way!