

BIBLE QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY DR. AYODEJI AWE

QUESTION 68- PASTOR GIVE US SOME ADVICE ON HOW PARENTS SHOULD HANDLE REBELLIOUS GROWN UP CHILDREN (ESPECIALLY AT AN AGE OLDER THAN 21).

ANSWER: The matter concerning grown up children who choose to hold beliefs and values and operate their lives contrary to the ways, manners and steps of believing parents could generate a lot of pain and often result in castles full of frustrations. The fact that a good parent loves the child who choose to go south brings one to a cross road.

This tendency takes after God who has often expressed pain and frustrations when the children of Israel and believers in the New Testament stepped out of bounds. It was bitter pills all the way. For instance in Deuteronomy 9, the events of Exodus 32 was referenced, reminding how the Lord identified these people as rebels and at a point was ready to abort them off the face of the earth while on the other hand, exalting Moses into a nation status. It took the intercession of Moses to cool God off. This vividly reminds us of the difference in the atmosphere where there are rebellious or good children. One evokes anger and ultimately death while the other brings joy and ultimately life of fulfillment.

God emphatically declared concerning his people who refused to honor him with the tenth of their income (supplied by God to begin with) - "ye are cursed with a curse..." (Mal.3:9) for refusing to give that which he lovingly asked in consonance with his principles whereby he would have opened the floodgates of heaven upon them. Of course the frustration is that he could not bless those he loves so much. Their rebellion tied his hands from moving in their behalf. He was pained that those whose abundant lives (John 10:10) would have elicited immeasurable joy and pleasure would become downsized and ill favored. He wished his children would prosper, and to see them go the opposite direction was very challenging to his psyche.

The challenge that God faced in this facet is relatable to what an average good and godly parent experiences when he or she has a grown child (son or daughter) who embraces the tendency to go away from everything they stand for. The foundation of all the items of discordance is the faith disparity. This cannot be denied; for we are enlightened by God: "with the same spirit have we all been

baptized into the body of Christ" (1Cor.12:13ff.), wherein all parts operate in consonance as they are all joined together under the headship of Jesus Christ. This allusion can be admitted to conjure the wish of a good parent, who desires that anyone with his last name, male or female be found traceable to the beliefs, values and identities that are the trademarks of the family.

Therefore, in as much as belief and faith are foundational to the everlasting identity of a man, my advice will commence from here. The first of a few homilies that will be a helpful reprieve to parents who have their hands full and challenged in this arena will be:

1. Introduce him or her to God early.

God gives a child to the parent. Every parent must remember what God spoke—“Train a child in a way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it” (Prov.22:6, NIV). For parents who still have babies in their care, this means that you must get them a good start that will form the bedrock for life training as suggested. And if any age for that matter, today is always the right time (2Cor.6:1-2).

Christine the baby just as Christ was. In other words, on the eighth day in the presence of church members, family, and friends, give him names, thank the Lord and have him prayed over (Luke 2:21).

On the 40th day just as Christ was brought into the temple to be dedicated, bring him to the altar to dedicate to the Lord. It is a time of consecration, giving him to the Lord for identification and commission into early spiritual nurture (Luke 2:22).

As you complete this stage, establish him in church. Stay in the good gospel church. It is imperative for you to stay in church; only the children of those parents in church can actually stay and begin to mature. Those that are planted in the house of the Lord will flourish in the courts of our God (Psa.92:13).

2. Keep them in faith.

The longer you and your family stay in this good church, the more the effect of partaking in the training in righteousness. As the word of God is disseminated, continue to live a life patterned by scripture (doctrine). It is a life that allows for reproof when you do wrong, correction and indoctrination into the right way of

life until you become a person fully molded and trained to be a ready tool in God's hand to be used for purposes that align with his universal plans. When a young person is immersed in this flow; it is difficult to be hijacked by a strange rebellious spirit. Many under this ordered circumstance are more prone to be educated in the divinity, which in turn prepares them to accommodate training in academics and morality.

3. Promote education in their lives.

When a man who is spiritually founded develops in intellect, the end product is excellence. Galileo, Isaac Newton, Michael Faraday (of old), and many erudite scientists of the modern day era like Albert Einstein (1955), brilliant scholars, and top notch professionals of today are glaring examples of what is obtained when a youth from a strong Christian family is dipped into a crucible of intellectualism. Children with a strong focus on distinctive ventures rarely go wayward. One indisputable by-product of training in excellence is the knowledge of cause and effect. Whenever the young comes to grasp with the effects of doing wrong, they are more likely to be careful in their actions. This sums up in a good life, as they reap harvests of continuous good works.

4. Reinforce values and responsibilities.

Every family ought to articulate values that members must learn. As the young ones are maturing in age and consciousness of life, parents must also endeavor to teach responsibility as a tool of excellence.

No one gets to successfully handle big assignments who is not aware of the need to be responsible. To be responsible is to be acquainted with what is needed to be done at particular instances and actually do them. To abdicate responsibilities is to be irresponsible. Irresponsibility often is a major dissenting force in the discord between believing parents and wayward grownups.

5. Enforce discipline at the point of errancy.

In spite of the excellent work parents have done, it is not impossible to find a child brought up in this environment go the other way. For those who may be

immersed in this challenge, this number is crucial for your reprieve.

Don't be afraid to enforce discipline in the family. The way is that before a child grows to become a semi grown up, there ought to have been established a way of life for your family which he will grow to learn. In this style referenced, God through his word would establish doctrine (a way to live), reproof measures (when members are errant), mechanism to veer towards right living, and attainment of an exemplary standard of life for a family of God. This is a model that a Christian family must aspire to establish.

Therefore as a godly parent when I have really done what is expected of me, that is, diligently established the first four steps, if a youth still chooses to foul the doctrine of the family, I stand firm and enforce discipline and compliance. Whether he is 18, 21, 25, 29, or any age for that matter, and he lives under the family roof, he is expected to subscribe to this admonition (or its prototype) recommended by the Lord – “Be careful how you live, not as unwise but as wise.....submitting to one another out of reference for Christ (Eph.5:19-21). This implies we will be apparent in our basic living. Since we are connected to one another, individual actions and living modes must take into account that one affects the other.

A few other understanding of common family coexistence that one must practice includes:

- a. At any point in time, someone knows your whereabouts.
- b. Subscribe to the common peace of the family. Conduct your life in such a way that you do not jeopardize others or become a burden or risk to them.
- c. Endeavor to create and sustain a good hygiene standard in the family. ‘Cleanliness is next to godliness’ is an old saying that cannot be faulted. A godly family does not breed diseases by its poor choice of living. For instance, shun smoking as a life habit and never bring cigarettes or any other things that people smoke into the family environment (if you are struggling in that respect). God’s people are receivers of vibrant and abundant lives in Christ.

- d. Fellowship at home. The age long maxim is hardly refuted- “a family that prays together stays together”. Praying together in a family creates a strong bonding power. It also paves a way for the progress of the family.
- e. Lastly, attend same church. When members of a family attend same church they are fed same doctrine which builds individual lives to similar standards. The family legacy so built is bundled in vivid display and effectiveness. There is the reality of common fulfillment for all in a family that has the same destination.

In closing, if you are currently dealing with a rebellious grown up, I recommend that the family start with a prayer project for him/her. Thereafter, sit down to restate the family values and expectations, inviting him to subscribe. With a loving entreat, I believe divine intervention will prevail. However in event of a dissent, it must be made known that a non-conforming lifestyle will not be tolerated. Do not be afraid to have this expressed, inscribed and emboldened.

God was never intimidated and neither will a godly parent. In the account of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), the rebellious son moved out because the good father plainly declared that his errant lifestyle is not welcome in the family house. Because he was then an adult by the law of nature and the land, he cannot be stopped if his resolve was to leave. Invariably he left, but time went to work. It all happened that after a season of extreme hardship, followed by soul searching entailed by repentance, he was confronted with no option but to return home.

Be encouraged: for the families that had been faithful, the end of the story is always far from tragedy. God is faithful and you can always count on his promise that children who were trained aright in Him at the onset will eventually be restored (Prov.22:6, *ibid.*). The one earlier referenced was a living proof (Luke 15:11ff, *ibid.*). He retraced his steps and came back volitionally. In our world of today, Frank Graham, son of the high profile Rev. Billy Graham was another indelible example (by his own account). Yes, all the wayward that had initial godly investments in them would be back ultimately. The sweetest part of the testimonies that trail these ordeals is that at the return, you wouldn't need to preach anew or enforce rules; when they returned, they were already thoughtful

and well coached, to get down straight to business of living in conformity with the family standards.

Godly fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters and people, I charge you to be encouraged. Know that indeed tears may endure the night, but surely joy comes in the morning. Do not be despaired. Keep the faith and relentlessly work the actions. All of our children are given of God; we will lose none to Satan, in Jesus Name, Amen.

For prayers, counseling or to have any of your biblical or Christian life questions answered, contact us at:

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