

## OUR MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO OUR CHILDREN

By Ted Hilton

It is said about Jesus "Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor that we through His Poverty might become rich!" This is the grandest view of generosity within all of literature! It is the love of God in action!

Paul further states, "Though I give my body to be burned and give all my goods to feed the poor and have not love I am nothing!" Our Lord Jesus was ultimately generous and loving, in light of these bountiful sentiments...

What is influencing Christian wealth builders today to leave the preponderance of their residue to their offspring or siblings, of which many of them are not in touch with the Lord's eternal purposes?

Could it be spiritual immaturity? Scripture is very clear as to what we are told to render unto the Lord. It is "The first fruits of all our increase!" Scripture also tells us to, "lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven where moth and rust will not depreciate it." In Matthew 6:16-21. Paul speaks to those whom the Lord has trusted with riches "to be willing to distribute and generously support others."

Paul also said "The children should not lay up for the parents but the parents for the children." It is quite wonderful when the Lord blesses us as parents to help our children get started in a godly fashion but not an indulgent soul destroying fashion.

Of all the aspects of depravity that are the most destructive both to angels and mankind it appears to be Pride. It destroyed heaven's angelic purity, and ushered in the early, eternal death of all of humanity according to Genesis 3. The Psalmist clearly points out that we are all conceived and born into sin and shapen in iniquity. (Psalm 51)

Keeping up with the Jones is a ghastly and destructive enterprise. If this is what your children have witnessed they are likely almost permanently damaged. However we are encouraged to read that the Lord Himself is able to "Restore the years that the Locusts had eaten".

There are many tragic stories to be told but some encouraging ones also. I know of one large family where when quite poor they decided to give 20% of their income to the Lord although the husband had a low paying job.

As the years went on the Lord blessed their efforts and this carpenter gathered wealth through hard work as a contractor.

As the children matured and left home to find their way in the world, their parents helped each one to put a down payment on a humble residence of some kind. The idea in the parents mind was to get them started in the market, and have a substantial project before them.

Good citizens and Godly children are not produced with carnal entertainment. But with industry, and responsibility.

We see kids coming to school in brand new cars bought for them by their indulgent parents. This often leads to all kinds of sin and sorrow. If the history of the child has been one where every demand was answered with immediate and temporary gratification, don't be surprised if infidelity and divorce are also demands that must be fulfilled for this child as this is the pattern that has been developed. This also is the reason why we have 50% of all marriages failing! And, let's not forget the millions of fatherless children growing up without the necessary moral and spiritual guidance to navigate life.

So what was the carpenter to do as he acquired substance over the years? Having a life of some small faithfulness to the Lord he looked at his assets, which the Lord had given him and his wife. They properly reckoned that this all belonged to the Lord. But because he was now older, the carpenter reasoned it was time to give serious thought to the distribution of these things. So, a responsible and generous portion was divided to the Children and grandchildren.

The larger portion was then determined to go to the furtherance of God's kingdom! The final amount of their savings was distributed to the Lord's work. It was the carpenter's joy to choose where the money was to be invested. It was generally outside their children's interest, since they had already been given their inheritance. This left the parents free, as God's own personal stewards, to distribute the balance to the Lord.

This is a place of distinctive privilege!

Let me set forth a clear warning to all Christian parents. We can unconsciously destroy our children's lives by giving them inordinate amounts of wealth. I have worked for the children of very wealthy people and noticed how depraved and unhappy they seemed to be. They recognized that they had not made it on their own! Some were hounded by the thought, "It was all handed to me. I have not accomplished anything on my own". I have heard them say this! It must be awful to live permanently in such a mired pit of self doubt.

Statistics also show that if the offspring of people of wealth give to some charity or cause, it is not to the Gospel or to fulfill the Great Commission! We have seen of late that they often give to social and cultural non-profit entities. And as one great Memphis preacher said, "social benefits just make people more comfortable on there way to hell."

A man of wealth I know recently sold a large plot of land. He put the whole amount into a private foundation so that all of the money could go into the Lord's work. And of course this deprived him and his family of the material benefits, but it did enrich the Lord's work around the world and let us not forget his eternal reward!

Scripture states, "With such sacrifices the Lord is well pleased!" And this will be treasure laid up in heaven!

When the Lord Jesus speaks of giving you will notice that the benefit is never indicated to be for Him but the benefit is for us. Jesus said that when we give, we are laying up treasure in Heaven. In other words it is for us. If we are stingy we are the losers!

Let me encourage you to become genuine givers and teach your children to do the same. They will most certainly thank you forever. And don't dote on your children and be reckless to their hurt. Go God's way!

A wise old man told me when I was a young parent. "If you cannot control yourself you will never control your children!"

We all need God's help.