

## 14. Helping Our Children Learn to Walk Properly Toward Others

In our last topic, we discussed helping our physical and spiritual children learn how to help others increase in love. Today, we want to help them learn to walk properly toward others especially toward those who are not yet Christians. 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 says, “That you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.” Today, we will be looking at the way to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to help others learn to walk properly.

First, in order to walk properly toward others, we see that we want to help our children to aspire to lead a quiet life. A quiet life is a life that is not stirring up conflict with others. The early church demonstrated this quietness in Acts 11:18 where we read, “When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, ‘Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.’” The church had heard about the family and friends of Cornelius turning to Christ. When Peter returned to Jerusalem, the leaders contended with him. In order to prevent conflict and division, Peter told exactly what had happened. When the church heard how the Lord had worked among the Gentiles, they became silent and gave glory to God instead of continuing to have conflict. We want to help our children learn to avoid conflicts with others.

Second, we see that we are to help our children learn to mind their own business. Paul wrote about this same topic in his second letter to the Thessalonians. 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 says, “For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.” Here, we see that a proper walk means that we help our children learn to stay out of the business of others and avoid gossiping about others. This is very important because such activities create barriers between people and make it harder to minister to them.

Third, Paul told the Thessalonians that a proper walk includes working with our own hands. Paul had to speak on this topic again in 2 Thessalonians. In 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9, we read, “For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.” Here, we see that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to provide a good example for others by working to earn their own living, instead of trying to take advantage of others. People are much more willing to listen to people who do not take advantage of them. We want to help our children learn to be an example in all areas of their lives.

Fourth, we see that a key part of helping our children to walk properly is to help them learn to walk properly toward those who are not yet Christians (those who are outside). Here, we see a key principle that we are to teach our children in order to help them become effective in reaching others for Christ. In fact, this summarizes all that has been said previously. Galatians 6:9-10 says, “And

let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.” Here, we see that a proper walk includes doing good to all including those who are not yet Christians. It is as we choose to do those things that are good in our relationships with non-Christians that we develop opportunities to share the Gospel with them.

Romans 15:1-3 tells us, “We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, ‘The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.’” Here, we see that we want to help our children learn to do good to those who are weak Christians. In addition, we are also to help them learn to do good toward those who are neighbors. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Christ defined a neighbor as anyone in need. We equip our physical and spiritual children to do good toward anyone that is in need by providing an example through what we do in our own lives.

One of the key things we want our children to understand is that they were created to do good works. Ephesians 2:10 says, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Here, we see that it was the plan of God before He ever created the world that Christians would do good works as a part of their ministry both to Christians and to those who are not yet Christians. These good works became possible when we became Christians because we were made new creations in Christ. This means that a part of our purpose in life for every Christian is to do good works. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” We do good works because we are motivated by the love that Christ showed to us instead of being driven by the fear that formerly controlled us.

We also see that we want to show our children how to do good works both by their actions and by their words. Ephesians 4:28-29 says, “Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.” We want to show our children how to do good by our actions. We want to show them how to speak words that will build up others. 1 Peter 4:10-11 says, “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” In these verses, we see that Christ has even given each Christian a spiritual gift to speak the Word of God and do good works to others through the ability that God supplies.

We also see that we are to pray for our children that the Lord will help them to develop good works. In Colossians 1:9-12, we read, “For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him,

being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.” Here, we see that as a part of our prayers for our physical and spiritual children that we are to pray that they will become fruitful in every good work.

We also see that we are to be an example to our children of how their life will develop good works. 2 Timothy 2:20-22 says, “But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” We help our children develop a life of good works as we show the importance of cleansing his or her life from all things that dishonor through confession of sins. That means that our children will be vessels of honor that are prepared by Christ for every good work. It also means that we help our children learn to flee certain things and follow other things.

Finally, we help our children become equipped for every good work as we follow the example of the mother and grandmother of Timothy. 2 Timothy 3:14-17 says, “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” As we show our children how to grow and mature and become men and women of God, we see that that their lives become equipped for every good work.

We see the reward for helping our children learn to walk properly in James 3:17-18 where we read, “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” We see that as we show our children how to apply the wisdom of God in their lives, they will have lives that become full of mercy and good fruits as they help others learn to experience peace with God. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your physical and spiritual children how to walk properly toward others.