

## 07 The Duties of Parents – Ryle’s Insights

### IX. *Train them to a habit of obedience.*

**Ryle sees this as perhaps** one of the most important parts of our duties as parents. I agree with him when he says, “No habit, I suspect, has such an influence over our lives as this. Parents, determine to make your children obey you, though it may cost you much trouble and cost them many tears. Let there be no questioning, and reasoning, and disputing, and delaying, and answering again. When you give them a command, let them see plainly that you will have it done.”

**Application:** Remember the text, James 2:14-26 – faith without works is dead. Obedience is the display of true faith. Tedd Tripp’s line regarding obedience is very useful: “Right away, all the way, with a cheerful heart.”

**Pit-fall** – don’t ever be tempted to show-off how obedient your children are in front of others. A well-trained child is fairly rare and does reflect well on his/her parents, but the *only* purpose of this training is that these little ones would truly know and please their Lord and Savior and bring glory to His name.

### Consider these passages about the importance of obedience:

**John 15:14** You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.

**Genesis 18:19** For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."

**Luke 2:51** Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart.

**Genesis 37:13** And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am."

**Isaiah 3:5** The people will be oppressed, Every one by another and every one by his neighbor; The child will be insolent toward the elder, And the base toward the honorable."

**2 Tim. 3:2** For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

**1 Tim. 3:4** one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence

**1 Tim. 3:12** Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

**Romans 1:5** Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name,

**Discussion Question #1:** Why is a *habit* of cheerful obedience so critical to child-training?

**Application:** Our great goal is that our children would do *what God bids them to do – repent, believe, and then pursue holiness*. Their sin-nature will drive them to rebel against us. With patience, self-control, and grace we must make them be good. And the fact is, children want adults to *help them* be good.

**Illustration:** One of my own children used to breathe a sigh of relief when he knew I was off for the day – especially when he was really little. I once asked him why when he asked me if I was staying home that day and I said yes he always seemed happy and relieved and he said, “because you will help me be good.”

**Application 2:** Kids desire these boundaries and will thrive in them – as long as we are self-controlled, consistent, and gentle in the way we hedge those boundaries around them.

**Application 3:** Few things are more dangerous to a child’s soul than to hear one of their parents clearly tell them: “so-and-so, stop touching that,” and they look back at their parent and then go right on doing what they were doing.

**X. Train them to a habit of always speaking the truth.**

**Proverbs 6:16-17** These six things the Lord hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: [17] A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood,

**Lying** is what originated in the heart of Satan. He lied to Eve when he said: “You will not surely die.” He spoke what *he knew* was not true. Lying is very evil and it is a vice which our children will very naturally develop. Some children will be more inclined to it than others and so we have to study them to see which ones have a particular propensity in the black arts of deception, exaggeration, and massaging language in their favor.

**Ryle says:** “Only think how much falsehood and deceit there is in the world! How much exaggeration! How many additions are made to a simple story! How many things left out, if it does not serve the speaker's interest to tell them! How few there are about us of whom we can say, we put unhesitating trust in their word! Verily the ancient Persians were wise in their generation: it was a leading point with them in educating their children, that they should learn to speak the truth. What an awful proof it is of man's natural sinfulness, that it should be needful to name such a point at all!”

**Discussion Question #2:** Why is speaking the truth basic and necessary to *success* in nearly every human endeavor at every stage of life?

**Ryle Says:** “You will find it a mighty help indeed, to be able always to trust their word. It will go far to prevent that habit of concealment, which so unhappily prevails sometimes among children. Openness and straightforwardness depend much upon a parent's treatment of this matter in the days of our infancy.”

**XI. Train them to a habit of always redeeming the time.**

**Point:** This is not to say that our children cannot have a good time, play, and act silly at times. But there is no question that hard work is something nearly all of us are averse to by nature. Young people do not naturally incline toward discipline when it comes to the use of their time.

**Ryle says,** “Idleness is the devil's best friend. It is the surest way to give him an opportunity of doing us harm. An idle mind is like an open door, and if Satan does not enter in himself by it, it is certain he will throw in something to raise bad thoughts in our souls. No created being was ever meant to be idle. Service and work is the appointed portion of every creature of God.”

**Application:** It is a very good thing to involve your children in your household ‘economy’ as soon as possible. They need to have responsibilities that are part of your home – like dishes, cleaning their rooms, cutting the grass, watching younger children if they are able to, cleaning the house, etc. Get them involved immediately so they understand that work is simply part of life. Many children really do believe that the purpose of life is to have fun and that their parents exist to help them achieve that goal. On the contrary, we were created to work. A great book to read together is Bob Schultz book, *Created For Work*. It has great stories and anecdotes on this very topic. Children need to understand that they were created for the purpose of *dominion*.

**Discussion Question #3:** What does it mean to say that man was created for “dominion?”

**Discussion Question #4:** What are some ways you have tried to get the concept of “redeeming the time” across to your children?

**Discussion Question #5:** How have you sought to get your children involved in the household ‘economy?’

**Discussion Question #6:** Why is idleness dangerous?

**Illustration:** I watched a documentary about Amish children once that really impressed me. Amish children, when they grow up and move out at age 16, are very sought-after by employers because they tend to be such excellent workers. The reason for this is that they've worked hard their whole life. Working was very much integrated into their entire educational process, and thus they rarely loaf on the job, and working long hours does not bother them the way it bothers other young people new to the workforce.

**Remember: Ezekiel 16:49-50** "Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. [50] And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit."

**Discussion Question #7:** What was King David doing just prior to his massive moral collapse?

**Application:** We need to foster a mentality of "staying on task" and "keeping our nose to the grindstone." Idleness is not a good thing, and yet it is often exactly where we *and* our children like to be!

**Ryle says:** "And indeed I do not wonder;—everything in the world around us seems to teach the same lesson. It is the still water which becomes stagnant and impure: the running, moving streams are always clear. If you have steam machinery, you must work it, or it soon gets out of order. If you have a horse, you must exercise him; he is never so well as when he has regular work. If you would have good bodily health yourself, you must take exercise. If you always sit still, your body is sure at length to complain. And just so is it with the soul. The active moving mind is a hard mark for the devil to shoot at. Try to be always full of useful employment, and thus your enemy will find it difficult to get room to sow tares."

**Ryle closes with this sentence:** "But if you love them well, let idleness be counted a sin in your family."