

“You’ll Never Amount to Anything!”

When ‘Telling it like it is’ destroys the faith of children
(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. Abusing power is not limited to rulers. Parents, teachers, older siblings, police, doctors, and religious leaders, et al, often engage in it. When one uses power to force another into an action overwhelming their power of choice, it is a misuse of power.
1. Occasionally, those who have experienced the abuse of power on them, abuse power themselves, because that’s what they know.
 2. The story is of a man who would give his son a dollar if he would go to bed without supper. Then, in the middle of the night, he would sneak in and steal the dollar from his son. The next morning he would scold his son for losing the dollar and make him go to school without breakfast.
 3. We hear a lot about terrible people these days, but what about in the Lord’s church? Are there persons, who think they have all the answers, but discourage the weak and damage the faith of children?

I. WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY?

- A. Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21; Matt. 18:6; Psalms 127:3-5; Luke 17:2; Mark 9:42
- B. What will destroy the faith and hearts of children?
1. Harsh punishment; judgmental words; unnecessarily strict demands; correcting children while enraged - Eph. 6:4
 2. Treating children dismissively or with disrespect - Eph. 4:29
 3. Comparing children or showing favoritism; the Patriarchs hurt their families by playing favorites
 4. Faultfinding and unrealistic expectations - Col. 3:21
 5. Double standards - Rom. 2:21
- C. “But the hearts of small children are delicate organs. A cruel beginning in this world can twist them into curious shapes. The heart of a hurt child can shrink so that forever afterward it is hard and pitted as the seed of a peach. Or again, the heart of such a child may fester and swell until it is a misery to carry within the body, easily chafed and hurt by the most ordinary things.” (Carson McCullers)
1. “We spend the first twelve months of our children’s lives teaching them to walk and talk and the next twelve telling them to sit down and shut up.” (Phyllis Diller)
 2. Children desperately need to know, and to hear in ways they understand and remember, that they’re loved and valued. A child born today in the United Kingdom stands a ten times greater chance of being admitted to a mental hospital than to a university
 3. What to tell a child when they are hurting from something a thoughtless or unkind person has said: Try not to allow it to trouble you; some people like to throw rocks at shiny things.

4. "If we throw wet blankets over our children's dreams, we darken their world and extinguish their desire to live. Always allow your kids to keep humming with dreams and ideas that fuel their passions. Never tell them something is impossible." (Suzy Kassem, Rise Up)

C. Deut. 6:7; Prov. 23:24

1. In their study, "Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency," Harvard University sociologists Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck identified four crucial factors in raising healthy, productive children:
 - a. The father's firm, fair, and consistent discipline.
 - b. The mother's supervision and companionship during the day.
 - c. The parents demonstrated affection for each other and for the children.
 - d. The family's cohesiveness; time spent together in activities where all participate.
2. The Bible already said the same thing.

II. WORDS CAN BUILD OR DESTROY: A LIFE, A HOME, A CHURCH

A. James 3:2-12

B. Our words have tremendous influence and power for good or evil

1. One small word can often control the destiny of a man or a congregation of the Lord's church.
2. A preacher asked a young man if he was a Christian. The young man said, "No." The preacher responded, "That's a shame, you are such a fine looking gentleman to be lost and going to hell."
 - a. Did he speak truth? Yes Did he do the Lord's work? Certainly not
 - b. Prov. 25:11; Acts 13:50
3. "Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this Island or lose the war. If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be free and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands. Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, "This was their finest hour." (Winston Churchill) With this speech, he moved Great Britain, the United States, and all of the Allies to hold fast and overcome the Nazi war machine
4. Meanwhile, 571 miles away in Berlin, Adolph Hitler was making speeches that resulted in the deaths of 70 million people, military and civilian.
5. Gospel preaching by men who loved the truth and the souls of hearers, Children's Bible classes taught by women who loved children and loved God's word moved, me to become a Christian and a Gospel preacher
6. And I have seen and heard words from Gospel preachers, Christians, and parents that have resulted in the death of the faith of multitude of young persons
7. "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth" - James 3:5. In 1871, Mrs. O'Leary was milking a cow that kicked over a lantern and started a

little hay on fire. By the time they put out the fire, 250 people had been killed, and 17,450 buildings had been destroyed.

C. Consider the impact of our words on children

1. A. B. Simpson wrote: "I'd rather play with lightning than speak a reckless word against a servant of Christ."
2. The words we speak reveal who we truly are to our children
 - a. Matt. 12:36-37, 15:18-20; James 3:9-12
3. In the natural world, inconsistency is an impossibility. A spring cannot bubble up fresh and bitter water simultaneously.
4. How often do some worship and praise God in the assembly, then leave the building and begin criticizing their own brothers and sisters in the presence of their children? Do with really think they are oblivious?!
5. How can we praise God out of one side of our mouths and backbite others out of the other side? Our children know who we really are.
6. How ironic for a man who spent his life combating sin and error in the pulpit, who strove mightily against sin and temptation in his own life, and who was active and generous in his work for the Lord, only to go to hell because he badmouthed the brethren in the hearing of his children. He "told them like it is" and destroyed their faith.
7. "For children to take morality seriously they must be in the presence of adults who take morality seriously. And with their own eyes they must see adults take morality seriously. What we desire our children to become, we must endeavor to be before them. Children need models, not critics" (William Bennett)