
Words of Truth

The Apple Can Fall Far From The Tree

By: Brian A. Yeager

The inspired writer Solomon said: *“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it”* (Proverbs 22:6). The world often says: *“Like father, like son”* or *“she is following in the steps of her mother”* or *“the apple does not fall far from the tree”*. It is certainly true, a parent’s influence can be seen in the life of a child and as that child grows into adulthood. However, it is not always a certainty. Bad parenting does not always translate into bad children/adults. Nor does good parenting always translate into good children/adults.

You would think that this is a “common sense” point. However, even amongst saints, some people think parenting is the source of all good and evil. That is not true. The choices of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:1ff.) had nothing to do with their earthly parents. They did not have any. Josiah was a faithful king, a dedicated student of God’s law, turned Judah back to God, and was like no king before or after him (II Kings 22:1-23:28 and II Chronicles 34:1-35:27). Josiah’s father Amon was evil (II Kings 21:19-26 and II Chronicles 33:21-25). Therefore, Josiah was not just like his father. Josiah was an apple that fell far away from the tree (so to speak). Furthermore, the example Josiah left for his children did not prevent them from sin. Two of his sons did evil in the sight of the Lord (II Kings 23:30-37).

Very rarely does any Scripture apply to all situations. Training up a child in the way he should go is certainly a work Christian parents need to do (Ephesians 6:1-4 and Titus 2:3-5). However, it is not a guarantee of anything. From the beginning, God has given man the right to choose good from evil. Every person has freewill (Genesis 2:15-3:19, Deuteronomy 5:29, Deuteronomy 30:15-20, Joshua 24:14-16, Ecclesiastes 7:29, Acts 2:37-41, Philippians 2:12, etc.). Nothing, including perfect parenting, can prevent bad decisions. For, each person’s decisions belong to them as do the consequences of those decisions (Galatians 6:7-9). God is clear that a child has their own choices to make and consequences to face as they grow into being their own persons.

The Word Of God Shows Us That Children Can Choose Different Courses

Since I know people will generally argue against what I am writing in this article, I am going to let God say more than I will. Thus, read this: *“The word of the Lord came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The*

fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, And hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman, And hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; He that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man, Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord God. If he beget a son that is a robber, a shedder of blood, and that doeth the like to any one of these things, And that doeth not any of those duties, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour's wife, Hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination, Hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: shall he then live? he shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him. Now, lo, if he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like, That hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, hath not defiled his neighbour's wife, Neither hath oppressed any, hath not withholden the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, but hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment, That hath taken off his hand from the poor, that hath not received usury nor increase, hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes; he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live. As for his father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did that which is not good among his people, lo, even he shall die in his iniquity. Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live" (Ezekiel 18:1-22).

Conclusion

Parenting means a lot (ex. I Timothy 3:4-5). You can answer for being a stumbling block to others (Romans 14:13). Yet, the very nature of mankind's freewill also dictates that we realize each person has his or her own choices to make. Nothing can stop that. The tree does not answer for the apple and vice versa (Deuteronomy 24:16).