

OUR MOST VALUABLE POSSESSION

(Eph. 6:4)

INTRODUCTION:

2. The real wealth of any nation is not found in its tanks, planes, bombs, political system, economic policies or fiscal soundness. The real wealth of any nation lies in its homes - the basic cell of society. When our homes are gone, our proud nation will sink into the ashes of a forgotten past.
3. Man's greatest responsibility lies in the rearing of his children in the way that God wants them to go.

I. PARENTS NEED TO UNDERSTAND THEIR CHILDREN PHYSICALLY.

- A. Children are living, changing organisms.
- B. No two children are alike - not even twins.
- C. Parents need to understand growth norms, mental sets, and the different stages all children go through on their way up to adulthood. Every parent should spend some money and time in reading some standard books on child psychology.

II. REARING CHILDREN OFFERS ONE OF LIFE'S GREATEST RESPONSIBILITIES.

- A. A child has the right to some things:
 1. An education as far as possible.
 2. A stable, and comfortable home life.
 3. The right examples of father and mother before him.
 4. A schooling in the word of God.
 5. An opportunity to face life upon a relative equality.
- B. Rearing children gives real meaning to life:
 1. Man and not things is the answer to our world's problems.

2. The solution to the world's ills are centered in the youth of today.

3. None of us can foretell the potentiality of our children:

Examples: (1) Life of Martin Luther
(2) Life of John Wesley
(3) Life of Alexander Campbell

(a) None of their mothers had the ability to see how greatly each of these men affected the religious world.

III. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THERE ARE A NUMBER OF PRINCIPLES I SHOULD INSTILL IN MY CHILDREN:

A. To learn to play the game of life fair and square.

B. To seek for "Truth" before arriving at decisions.

C. To never bend a principle for any man for any price.

Examples: Racial prejudice
Capital - Labor relations
Religious convictions

D. To judge a fellow for what he is - and not for what he has.

E. That work is honorable and laziness is to be abhorred.

F. To seek the finer things in life and not the lewd and debased and vulgar.

G. To seek a Christian partner when he is ready to marry.

H. To observe the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

1. Our children must learn that our religion bridges national boundaries, national prejudices, etc. We must show them an appreciation of the value of a soul anywhere on earth.

I. To know that the essence of life is to serve and not to be served.

J. To know that the end of life is to reach Heaven with the Redeemed of the Ages.

1. We should teach our children the Bible diligently early in life.
2. We should insist that it become the most important part of his life.
3. We should want to make him a Bible scholar - that he might aid others.
4. Above all: I would persuade him to become a Christian.

IV. OF COURSE, AS PARENTS WE MUST SET THE RIGHT EXAMPLE FOR OUR CHILDREN.

- A. The first book your child reads is your life.
- B. Do not neglect your most valuable possessions - You will surely suffer remorse in later life if you do.

An old man going a lone highway
 Came at the evening cold and gray
 To a chasm vast and wide and steep
 With waters rolling cold and deep.

The old man crossed in the twilight dim
 For that sullen stream had no fear for him
 But he turned when safe on the other side
 And built a bridge to span that tide.

Old man, said a fellow traveler near,
 Why do you waste your strength building here
 Your journey will end with the ending day
 And you ne'er again will pass this way.

The builder lifted his old gray head
 Friend, in the path I've come, he said
 There followeth after me today
 A youth whose feet must pass this way
 This chasm that has been as nought to me
 To that youth may a pitfall be
Friend, I am building this bridge for him.

CONCLUSION:

1. If we build strong congregations in our generation, our children will be able to build stronger ones in theirs.

2. If we can build a bridge across the sullen stream of racial prejudice, our children will be able to fashion a new society.
3. If we can build a bridge of human understanding and mutual appreciation among the world's diverse populations - perhaps our children's children will enjoy an era of peace.
4. If we will build our bridge of family love upon the pillars of God's eternal love - then our family circle will not be broken at the Judgment Day.

NOTE: Life's days pass swiftly and our children are soon gone from home. Let us resolve to make every day count to its fullest.

WHEN THE LAST CHILD LEAVES

The last one cleaned his bedroom out;
He left today at five.
There was not much to talk about;
His car backed down the drive.

This is the first night they all sleep
Behind some other door.
This is the first night these rooms keep
Our children safe no more.

They never were our own to hold;
We had them for that time
When they could not yet handle cold
And needed help to climb.

You loved them, Lord, before the day
They came into our sight.
You love them more than words can say –
Please love them well tonight.

–Robert M. Stanley