

### C. Control: The Parental Goad

Controlling children and then teaching them to control themselves is essential to an ordered life. When children are given restraints, boundaries, and limitations they find within that perimeter a sense of security and safety where things are predictable. Such a child does not have to face the confusion of a disordered life. There is peace in this household. Parents and children coexist in an environment which allows each family member to freely develop and express his own personality.

Parents should love their children unconditionally which means that their love should not be based on the attractiveness of the child. A pseudo form of unconditional love almost always exists in parents since they view their offspring as a positive expression of their biological efforts. This is exposed as pseudo whenever the child begins to develop and display trends, actions, and idiosyncrasies which are in opposition to parental expectations.

When parents, who have unrealistic expectations about their children, find that those expectations are not met it creates three serious problems:

1. **Eyes on self.** The issue in child training is not to mold the child into some predetermined image conceived of by the parents. This is selfish and self-centered. The objective is to instill virtue and integrity into his stream of consciousness. With truth in the soul the child will develop into the person God wants him to be.
2. **Eyes on people.** Parents often look to other people's children and see in them the attributes they sense are missing in their own. They then begin to put pressure on their children to become what they are not. It is an unrealistic expectation to force your child to be like other children whom you admire. Remember John Paul Jones' admonition, "We must do the best we can with what we have."
3. **Eyes on things.** You covet other children's ability to learn the ABCs, or work puzzles, or speak in sentences, or do well in school, or excel in sports while yours do not measure up as quickly or as efficiently. Further, you become frustrated that they are not as adept at certain mental or physical disciplines as you perceive that you are. This is emphasis on things, i.e., talent and ability. You're dealing with the results of a gene-pool crapshoot here. Take what you've got and instill virtue and integrity into his stream of consciousness and let God take care of the details.

Remember that you have the advantage as far as God is concerned. He has created a soul, perfect in essence, and imputed it to your child at selection. This soul is *tabula rasa*. The responsibility for what goes into its stream of consciousness and especially its conscience has been delegated to you as parents. So, forget the biological aspects of your child and emphasize the mental and ultimately the spiritual.

A realistic approach orients not to the biological advantages or disadvantages of the child but to the fact that he has a perfect soul as far as essence is concerned. Further, you have been given the advantage of working with a stream of conscience which is *tabula rasa*. You have the opportunity to develop a vessel of honor by training and teaching the principles of virtue and integrity. This training and teaching process, in order to be objective, must be conducted under three problem-solving devices, all of which express some form of virtue love:

1. **Personal love for God.** This is the first device developed in the advanced Christian life. Until the believer orients to God's love for him, it is impossible for him to acquire an acceptance of self. Personal love for God enables the believer to acquire spiritual self-esteem, a conclusion reached under genuine humility that says you are somebody based on grace provisions from God through Christ. This in turn motivates:

2. Unconditional love for all mankind. This device enables the believer to resolve challenges to his momentum, such as, people, system, thought, and disaster testings'. It also helps overcome the hurt, frustration, anger, bitterness, implacability, and hatred which will inevitably emerge from the child's sinful nature as you attempt to train and teach him. These two devices work in tandem until they are amplified by the priority solution, which is:
3. Occupation with Christ. This device is what changes your mind about self and people.