

THAT LIFE IN YOUR HANDS

Proverbs 22:6

Introduction: It's a common thing to hear our young people cry out about wanting to be left alone, to do their own thing, to live their life the way they want. We tell others that it is OUR lie and we will live it the way we want. What about those little lives of your own children?

Generation after generation of children are born into homes, they didn't choose their parents. They come with sparkling potential, amazing capacity to learn. They come without prejudices, are open to guidance, respond to discipline. For better or worse, their lives are YOURS for the shaping and moulding.

1. You and you only are entrusted to nurture and train your children.

- What that child of yours becomes depends upon YOU.

2. Much is said today about the juvenile delinquency rampant in the children of today and it is true.

- There are practically no moral standards.
- Crime has mushroomed and there is the ever present drug problems.
- Our country has a problem today unlike it has ever had before.
 - There are more prisoners than preachers, more criminals than college students, arrests on moral charges are made less than every 10 minutes; over 250,000 children are born out of wed-lock each year, a murder every hour, suicide every 20 minutes or so, a major crime every 15 seconds and arrests for all criminal offences total over 500 per hour.
 - Over half of the crimes of violence are committed by our teenagers. The crime rate of this age group increased over 55% in a 5 year period.
- Alarming? Many factors contributed to these figures: poverty, flaunting of traditional codes of morality by movies, television, the internet, pornographic publications available to the youth. All these have tended to help boost the youth crime rate.

3. The real cause for the juvenile delinquency problem lies deep and very close.

- THE REAL CAUSE LIES IN THE HOME.
 - Seeds of crime are sown in the childhood. Whatever other causes there are, they are secondary. There has been a major breakdown in the home, the family life.
- It all began some 60 years ago when America began to push away from the shores of virtue and integrity. In the name of freedom and "broadness" our country cast off the old restraints and was caught up in the quicksand of sin and we have become quickly enslaved.
- This country has never been a totally, truly Christian nation. Even in the Puritan era there were signs of delinquency.

4. We are living in an age of relativism.

- We have no "cut and dried" standards of which to judge right and wrong.
- The Bible is no longer considered as reliable, important or useful.
- The authority of God's Word is no more.
- In seeking to build a great nation, we have forgotten its true founder - God.

5. The only thing that can halt our nation's spiraling youth problem is the reconstruction of the home and family life.

- Delinquents ARE NOT BORN. They are made and the learning process begins early in life.
- Far too many Christians have failed to apply their faith in the everyday experiences of family life.
- The Christian must live his/her Christian life at home as well as anywhere else.

6. Another thing that can help stem the tide of our degeneracy is DISCIPLINE.

- Not punishment and correction by itself, but TEACHING. We must spend the time, effort and wisdom, we must pay the price to help our children develop a Christ-like character.

7. It is sometimes easier to become overly involved in community and social affairs than to be good parents.

- Some parents are just too busy, even some pastors are so busy doing "God's Work" that they neglect their own families.
- God doesn't call people to do social work, but God does call parents to discipline their children.
- Discipline is necessary. When a child reaches the kindergarten age, he/she has already spent more time in home than he/she will spend in Church during his/her lifetime.
- Discipline in the home is essential from the time of birth until maturity. The form will change, but the need remains.

8. What then shall we teach our children?

- Teach them the basic principles of Christianity.
- Guide them to a love of God and others.
- Confront them with the vastness of the power of God.
- Speak to them about Jesus Christ. Lead them to an understanding of what He has done for them.
- Tell them about the sinfulness of man, his/her weaknesses, his/her dependence, duty, hope of salvation.
- Teach them about the Holy Spirit, His power, His presence.
- Teach them to pray, to talk to God as to a friend.
- Teach them to love the Bible, the Word of God.
- Instruct them to respect the rights of others.
- Teach them thoroughly and continually.
- HOWEVER, you cannot adequately do this unless YOU ARE AN EXAMPLE of what you are trying to teach your children.

CONCLUSION:

1. Parents should be living textbooks for their children.
2. The life of your children are in YOUR hands, not some school teacher, not some teacher at Church.
3. It is a serious business and requires serious and constant effort.
4. Whose fault is it, who is to blame for the delinquency of our youth today? What might have made things to be different in a more positive, better way?