

Raising Children for God (Volume 5)

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Training in Obedience

It is written: "Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith" 1 Tim 1:5.

Upbringing is a purposeful continuous process of forming the mind, character and personality of a child in accordance with God's principles, cultural values and social norms. Upbringing is aimed at developing volitional, moral, ethical, cultural, intellectual and physical qualities of a person. This process includes transmitting to the child knowledge, moral values, experience, abilities to distinguish good from evil for their further independent development, socialization and self-realization in society.

Obedience is a child's behavior that includes voluntary fulfillment of requests, demands, instructions and rules of parents, based not on fear of punishment or authoritarian pressure, but on a natural desire to fulfill what they are asked to do or what is expected of them.

Obedience is one of the most important skills that a child must master as early as possible, since throughout their entire subsequent life they will have to constantly make similar decisions in one situation or another, based on their desires and knowledge gained in the parental home. Father and mother, through their influence and parental authority, lay the foundation for developing principles of obedience.

A child's will is subject to strong influence from instinct, innate carnal nature, uncontrolled feelings and unbridled appetite. They do not yet know how to distinguish good from evil and make conscious choices, and therefore will naturally demand what the lower forces of the soul dictate to them. Their will, mind and conscience are pure, like a white sheet of paper, and open to learning. And it is the parents' task to instill in children those skills that will not cripple the child's personality, but will correspond to God's will and expectations.

The habit of being obedient to parents is not developed in one go, but as a result of constant influence and instruction, and personal example from the father and mother, who themselves are obedient to the higher Heavenly Authority. This habit helps in the future to be accepted in any society, to be a good friend, to be obedient to new requirements and to be a law-abiding citizen of one's country.

Obedience makes a civilized person out of a savage who knows nothing, and the goal of upbringing is for a person to learn to control themselves and subordinate all their desires and wants to God's will. We read in 1 Pet 1:22: "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart."

Parents should always remember that God cooperates with them and in response to their efforts also exerts His influence. Our child is also God's child, whom the Lord loves and wants to see in His Kingdom. And when we call upon God's name to help in raising children, then the Holy Spirit performs His part of the work, which He will not do without us.

Teaching a child obedience based only on what the father and mother desire is a serious mistake, because they too can make mistakes and disappoint their pupils with their behavior. Parents should initially instill in children that their obedience is based on what the Lord and His law require, which is the highest Authority for both children and their parents. In such a case, parental mistakes will not destroy children's trust in God, since the child will understand that their dad and mom are also learning obedience from Higher Powers.

In a child's nature there are already seeds of rebellion and discontent, which are called heredity, and training in obedience leads this little person through various deprivations, disappointments, hardships and joys of life, to discipline them and teach them to distinguish good from evil, choosing the good. Obedience conquers all hereditary inclinations toward evil and teaches the child's will voluntary agreement in a spirit of humility and joy. Obedience from fear of punishment, due to

threats and reproaches, or due to lack of strength to resist parental authority is a temporary concession that will not be permanent, but will someday lead the child's soul to indignation and rebellion, and this will cause in them a spirit of conscious resistance to the parents' will. Although the child is small, they already have a sense of justice and very strong carnal inclinations toward selfishness, and these qualities of the soul will necessarily be set in opposition to parental authority. One should not fear this, but must be ready for such actions and overcome such manifestation with a spirit of love and respect, explaining to the child their mistake and how it is better to behave.

Parental requirements, based on their knowledge of truth and fear of God, must be constant and consistent with principles. If something is not allowed to be done, then it is not allowed to be done always, without any compromises. Then it will be easy for the child to absorb this rule and mark this prohibition as a law that cannot be broken.

One should not forget that the disobedience of the first person opened the door to lawlessness and was passed down by inheritance to all his descendants. If you want to have this evil in your house and see how it progresses, then allow children to do what they want, based on their desires.

Restrictions in bad things and freedom in good things set certain boundaries in the child's consciousness, and they feel free and loved within these boundaries and develop fully, having a creative approach to life.

If I only weed out weeds in my garden, nothing good will grow. For me to get something tasty and edible from the field, this needs to be planted and cared for. The same principle operates in a child's life. They need not only to be forbidden something, but also to be taught good manners, to have the advantages of obedience explained to them, to be instilled with useful truths and to be given a good example through one's behavior. When words correspond to the parents' life, then children willingly copy this model, and it becomes their worldview. Any obedience from a sense of duty, fear or pity is short-lived, but submission

that has entered the heart from love, from understanding and distinguishing good and evil, will be a strong anchor of truth, holding the ship of the child's life during storms and trials.

Obedience to a person who has power and authority is temporary, as long as there is danger of punishment and fear of responsibility for violation. Obedience from principle is long-lasting and does not require constant parental control. The child themselves does not want to do what is bad, and when this principle is established in the heart by constant instruction and encouragement in a spirit of love and friendship, then the child's will becomes unshakeable in this matter, and it is not difficult for them to resist evil without suffering from mockery or insults from worldly surroundings. Love cannot live outside of obedience, for it is obedient to God and knows His voice.

Training in obedience is not only a temporary good for today, but also the formation of a child's good character, which over the years will mature and lead an independent lifestyle and use those advantages of a godly life that they were taught in their father's house.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Col. 3:20-21; 1 Sam. 15:22-23; 1 Pet. 1:14-15; Isa. 29:23-24; Rom. 1:30; 5:19; 6:16-17; Phil. 2:12-13; Gen. 2:16-17 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What is obedience?
5. What was the very first sin of the first people?
6. Why is obedience based on fear of punishment ineffective?
7. How to achieve children being obedient?
8. How does sincere obedience differ from forced obedience?
9. Do you see similarity in obedience between earthly children and heavenly ones?
10. Is it pleasant for you to deal with obedient children and people? What is their difference from others?
11. Does your love give the child the right to choose - to obey or not, or do they have no chances?

12. Why is it wrong to base obedience only on parental authority?
13. In order to demand obedience from children, do you need to be obedient to Higher Authority yourself?
14. Who are law-abiding citizens? Does this obedience originate in the family?

Obedience in Love

The obedience that God expects from me should not be based on fear of punishment, on blind and thoughtless submission to His will, or on a desire to receive the highest reward. Although all these factors may be present in the educational process, they are not God's desired instrument and means for achieving the goal of submitting my will to God's. Although God has enough strength and means to punish sinners, to humble the proud, and to convince the stubborn, this is an extreme measure that does not solve the problem of sin at the heart level, but very clearly shows what consequences an ungodly lifestyle entails.

The most striking example of God's punishment was the waters of the flood. They allowed people to reap what they had sown, but this, although it humbled all pride, did not make sinners righteous and did not teach them unconditional love.

Obedience from love is a sincere expression of heartfelt attachment and a desire to please the one you love, to fill their heart with joy and understanding of their value and significance to you. In love there is no fear of punishment, but there is fear of causing pain through your disobedience or of causing grief to the one with whom you have friendly relations, and whom you love with all your soul.

In raising a child we deal with a strong will that cannot yet distinguish good from evil and respond to love with love, but which from birth has egocentric settings and categorically meets any discomfort, injustice, pressure or violence from the outside. If this will is suppressed by a stronger parental will, then one needs to understand what awaits such educators in the future. This can lead to rebellion, turning into open revolt, when your child becomes a teenager and will already decide for themselves how to live. Or this can lead to a broken psyche, when a person becomes a spiritual abuser or victim who will be used for selfish purposes or on whom people will wipe their feet. Or evil will become the norm of life for a person, and not something bad.

Of course, there are many exceptions when a crippled soul finds God and receives healing in the rays of His love, and we see such examples of transformation in God's church. But is it necessary to bring a soul to such a state?

Obedience in love is not permissiveness in a friendly atmosphere, but conscious perception of God's will, which is revealed in constant wise instruction from godly parents and encouraged by their good words and personal example in a spirit of meekness and patience.

Jesus taught that we, being evil, know how to give good gifts to our children (Matt. 7:11). But the consequences of such upbringing will be catastrophic for the soul, and there is no guarantee that this soul will be saved for Eternity.

Although God's grace is able to correct much in the heart and heal the soul, will this soul have the desire and faith to come to God for this healing?

A family in which they speak about God, pray to Him, observe His laws, but do not have mutual love, bears distorted testimony about the One who is Love.

In any army there exists the concept of discipline, and that army in which there are no iron rules suffers huge losses and decomposes within itself. But military discipline has other goals and shows no mercy to violators. But when a disciplined serviceman finds himself in a free environment where he can be himself, and the punishing sword of military regulations does not hang over him, then he can show the true face of a "free" person who, it turns out, is not free from the influence of sin.

Love that lives in the heart of parents will necessarily wisely manifest itself in raising their children. My wife and I, having learned to love each other, cannot relate differently to those whom the Lord will give us to raise.

Love knows how to boldly meet all children's whims and attacks and choose the most suitable methods of influence and impact without suppressing the will.

For example, a mother asks her daughter to clean up her toys, but the three-year-old girl demonstratively says "No" and goes about her business. If the mother begins to force the child to perform the required task through threats of punishment or through physical pressure, not backing down, then in this relationship a conflict arises between the mother's will and the daughter's, in which the mother achieves the desired result, and the daughter suffers defeat and harbors resentment because of such violence. And someday the daughter will pour out all her indignation on the mother in an unpredictable form.

But if the mother, in response to the daughter's refusal to tidy up, herself cleaned up the toys, and then, calling the child to her, explained how bad it is to be a disobedient girl and imposed punishment on the daughter, which she carried out, then in this case there was no conflict of will. The mother respectfully accepted the child's protest and punished the daughter for disobedience, explaining with love why she is forced to take such extreme measures. The daughter understands that her disobedience was the cause of the punishment, but her will did not suffer in the process. No one humiliated her.

Love knows how to find a wise approach in achieving proper discipline. It respects the opinion of another, but at the same time feels when children's selfishness strives for primacy, and gives it no chances for this.

Love is not permission for a child to do everything they want, but wise control of all the little one's actions within the framework of their safety and in accordance with God's requirements. Love successfully suppresses all children's rebellions, leaving no seeds of rebellion in the child's heart. Any attempt to suppress disobedience with the help of physical force or age superiority violates the will and sows seeds of rebellion in the child's heart, which will necessarily sprout and make themselves known after many years.

It is important to understand that love's victory is not achieving a quick result of obedience here and now, but a long-term upbringing project that purposefully leads the child's will to

personal victory over the power of evil and conscious choice of the path of good. And life in the parental home helps the son or daughter to clearly see the advantage of righteousness and the consequences of disobedience.

The greater the authority of parents in the eyes of their children, the less this authority manifests itself during critical trials. Love knows how to protect and support parental authority without infringing on children's rights. Children depend on father and mother, although sometimes it seems to them that they are the most important in the world. However, parental love helps them come down from the pedestal of their imagination and do what adults ask them to do.

Any requirement or rule should not be expressed in a harsh and rude form, like the words: "Didn't you hear what I said!" or "How many times do I have to repeat this to you!" It is best that any requirements or objections to a disobedient child be based on mutual sympathy and respect.

Look into your heart. Is it pleasant for you when your boss yells at you or calls you bad names, even if you did something wrong? I think you are not very happy with such violence. And what do children feel?

Gentle instruction with good words, but firm principles, is much more willingly received by the ear than harsh and angry remarks.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Prov. 25:15; Col. 3:20; 1 Cor. 13:4-8; Rev. 3:19; Jer. 3:22; Rom. 6:17; Phil. 2:12; Philem. 1:22; Heb. 2:2; 1 Pet. 1:14; Mic. 5:15 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What is obedience in love?
5. What is obedience from love?
6. Should parents who want to have obedient children treat them with love?
7. How does obedience from fear differ from obedience from love?

8. How does the Lord raise His children? Are you obedient to Him from fear or from love, or disobedient altogether?
9. How to determine if I am obedient to God?
10. Do you think the promise from Luke 1:16-17 will be fulfilled in our days as well?
11. What does it mean to "follow the Lamb wherever He goes"? Rev. 14:3.
12. When the Lord advises me something, does He expect my obedience in following this advice? Rev. 3:18.
13. Why does the Lord love, rebuke and punish those who are obedient to Him, and not touch the disobedient? Rev. 3:19.
14. Should we strive for obedience from rebellious children or let them live as they want?

Boundaries of Obedience

One of the laws of happy life is the rule: "I am obedient." When some requirement is put forward in a harsh form, as an order that does not tolerate objections and violations, then a strong will is inclined to resist, be indignant and go against such orders. And if one has to submit from fear, then in fear there is torment. Boundaries for children's behavior in the family can be established rigidly and authoritatively, which will bring order, but will not give the child a sense of security. They will be tormented by pangs of conscience and fear of punishment, which can lead to serious problems in the psyche.

Any law or requirement must have executive power that will quickly identify the violator and punish them for disobedience. Without such power, every rule takes the form of a recommendatory nature, regardless of what tone it sounds in.

In an amazing way, understanding of what and when can be done, and what should not be, is already embedded in the child's consciousness. They so keenly feel the intonation of voice and facial expressions of their parents that they do not need additional explanations when something is forbidden to them. But sinful nature is always inclined to resist prohibitions, and it explores those boundaries within which parental instructions can be violated. This boundary may be a more raised tone or physical intervention by parents who take the child in their arms and do not give them the opportunity to continue moving in the wrong direction. These may be sharp orders to stop the violation or appropriate punishment for open disobedience. The child goes to the end, trying to understand where that line is located, beyond which it is better not to go, and when they have determined this extreme point, they can behave calmly within these boundaries, even if this boundary is the mother's hysterical screaming. In essence, parents themselves set these boundaries within which their children can do everything they please.

When a child has just learned to walk, they are inclined to poke into all cracks, touch everything and study everything. And

many prohibitions are incomprehensible to them, because the surrounding world is so interesting, and there is so much toilet paper that it can be pulled for a very long time, and it does not end. At such an age, wise parents close all cabinets and doors that it is undesirable for the child to open, and if they found something and began to study it, then they can easily be moved to another place.

But when this little citizen has learned to speak and can understand and analyze what they are told, they already become responsible for their behavior and must bear the consequences of their disobedience.

Let's take an example of one of the boundaries. At a certain time, the daughter needs to go to sleep. But she has so many interesting things to do that she decides not to pay attention to mother's rules and continues to solve her little problems. Mother already repeats her requirement in a raised tone, but the daughter seems not to hear and is busy with more important matters. Mother already very loudly lets it be known that it's time to sleep and everything must be left, or there will be trouble. The daughter says: "Right now, mom" and continues to play her games. And then mother's patience snaps, and she bursts into the children's room with a distorted face and begins very loudly demanding to stop everything and quickly go to bed. The daughter understands that the boundary is close, and pretends that she is already getting ready, reluctantly leaving her important affairs. Mother left with a feeling of victory and went to finish reading the story of friends on the internet. And the daughter calmly continued her games, being in a state of tension. When mother once again looked into the children's room, then an explosion of emotions occurred, and the daughter understood that she had reached the final limit, quickly climbed under the blanket and asked to turn off the light. Mother threatened that next time she would punish her and, extinguishing the lamp, went to her room. What happened in the child's heart? She was finding out that extreme line beyond which it is already undesirable to go. And mother allowed the daughter to establish this boundary as far as possible. Next times the child will test the strength of these

restrictions and possibly try to push them even further in mother's direction. And if the mother decides to move the boundary toward the daughter, then she will have to meet lawful resistance and indignation for violating children's rights that mother herself established.

In another case, mother asked the daughter to finish her games and prepare for sleep. The daughter nodded and continued her games. Mother understood that she was ignored and, taking her phone, set a timer on it, saying that the daughter has another 5 minutes to finish her games and start preparing for sleep. After which they parted. When the bell rang, mother immediately entered the children's room and made it clear with her whole appearance that the games were over, and it was time to go to sleep. To all the daughter's statements and requests to play a little more, mother tenderly offered sweet sleep so that in the morning she could continue doing all important things. She began helping to put away toys and talking about the need to go to the toilet and pray before sleep, not making any compromises with the daughter's desires. The firmness of intentions in mother's voice convinced the daughter that here ends the invisible boundary, and she ran to the bathroom to brush her teeth. Perhaps in the future the child will want to move this line in mother's direction, considering mother's busyness with other tasks. But here everything depends on the wisdom and readiness of mother to allow this to the daughter.

In communication between people there exist certain stages and boundaries of what is permitted, determined by them. Even in friendship there are certain boundaries beyond which one cannot go with impunity, although sometimes one so wants to move to closer communication and know more unexplored depths. In relationships with our children we also establish certain boundaries of what is permitted, within which children feel calm and can do what they want. If we do not set these boundaries, then children begin to do this, and they determine those "red lines" beyond which it is better for them not to go. And this is the worst thing that parents can allow children. This

will mean that the child can at any time bring the situation to a boiling point and feel safe within these boundaries.

There is another situation when boundaries have unclear outlines. Today the child should behave one way, tomorrow differently, then as they want until they fall asleep from fatigue, then as the parents want, and depending on what mood they are in. In such a case it is difficult for children to decide, and they will rebel against such treatment and behave unpredictably.

God's law, rules and God's commandments determine those boundaries in relationships with Him and between people, within which all society can be safe and engage in what is acceptable and lawful. When these rules do not exist, then anarchy and chaos come, and people themselves must establish their own laws that will divide society into class masters and slaves. This is what the enemy of the soul wants and constantly offers people new prospects of another "ism" that in its root contradicts God's standards and does not bring happiness to people, although it may give some temporary benefits.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Ex. 20:1-17; Gen. 2:16-17; 1 Kings 2:36-37; Jer. 5:22; Job 38:8-11; Ps. 104:15; 1 Pet. 1:22 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What are boundaries of obedience?
5. Why are boundaries needed in relationships?
6. Who should establish boundaries in the family, and where do they go?
7. Are God's commandments those boundaries that are better not to violate?
8. Do commandments protect those who are within their limits?
9. Can certain boundaries be used to punish a child? For example, putting them in a corner for some time?
10. What will happen if when establishing boundaries there is no executive power for control and punishment of violators?

11. What to do if a three-year-old child violates parents' commands and establishes their own rules?
12. What will happen if all boundaries in upbringing are removed and they are not established?
13. Is it necessary to be a strict parent if boundaries are being violated?
14. From what age is it necessary to establish certain boundaries and introduce clear rules?

Gentle Tongue

Among the laws of physics there is Newton's third law, which states that the force of action equals the force of counteraction, which is directed in the opposite direction. There is also the following rule. In the presence of voltage in an electrical circuit, an electric current arises, and this current encounters resistance, depending on the properties of the conductor. Similar principles can be traced in child-rearing, but they have exceptions when love and wisdom are present in instruction on the true path.

If we take the example of Jesus and trace with what love and tenderness He saved the perishing and close to death, but at the same time was principled and merciless in relation to all sin, then we will see in this example a special power capable of changing life and freeing from the power of evil.

The Lord Himself described His mission thus: "Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will declare justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench, till He sends forth justice to victory; and in His name Gentiles will trust." Matt. 12:18-21.

We also read in Prov. 25:15: "By long forbearance a ruler is persuaded, and a gentle tongue breaks a bone."

In calmness and gentleness there is a special power of influence that is able to overcome any impact and gently touch the strings of a child's soul to teach them to willingly do what their instructors desire. Children more willingly obey requests and gentle instruction than screaming, orders and harsh demands. And this obedience eventually becomes a habit. Even when a child does not understand how another act of obedience will serve their good, but having experience of previous relationships with loving parents, they rely on their wisdom and

with childlike trust submit to their authority, thereby evoking parental approval.

Children are the most desperate fighters for justice and feel very well when parents are wrong and when they act with love.

Good, tender and polite words of instruction are understandable and pleasant to the ear at any age and are perceived more willingly than harsh statements. If we take a platform with sand and place a load weighing 10 tons on it, then the sand will sag under this weight, but will not allow this load to fall through itself and will remain dry and loose. But if we create certain boundaries and pour 10 cubic meters of water into them, which weighs the same as the previous load, then we will soon see that all the water quickly went into the sand and left behind a moist surface from which interesting forms and structures can be built.

A child perfectly hears the intonation of a request and well understands when "no" means prohibition, although said with tenderness and love, or when they hear uncertainty, which sounds to them like a recommendation that can be ignored with impunity.

The habit of being obedient to wise parents is not developed in one go, but day by day in strict adherence to parental instructions. And in this sequence parents sometimes experience more tension and problems than their children. Father and mother must be in agreement with each other and keep the bar of discipline at the proper level, regardless of their well-being and mood. Stability in requirements and inviolability of established rules accustom the child to obedience, and they develop their own desire to live in the order they have been taught.

Multiple requests and instructions expressed at once can confuse a child, and they will simply forget what they were told, and will necessarily do something wrong. For example, a mother decided to quickly run to the store for salt and before leaving she gave her little daughter 27 gentle instructions about how to behave in mother's absence. One can be sure that

the daughter will be confused, although she will nod her head, and then immediately forget everything she was told, and begin to do what will be interesting to her. In such a case it is better to give the child some one task that will be within their strength and to their liking, and then check how the daughter coped with it.

Politeness and respectful manner of communication opens the child's heart, and the child willingly absorbs all kinds of instructions, and then boasts to parents about their obedience and experiences genuine happiness and satisfaction from having done something useful and pleasant for mom and dad.

There are some children's actions that exceed the child's strength, and they cannot cope with this themselves in the long term, so parents should understand this and choose a different tactic of influence. For example, if a child slouches, stutters or bites their nails, then the prohibition to do this will be unconsciously violated and bring pangs of conscience, but the problem will remain. Therefore, in this case parents need wisdom on how to correct these vices that their child is unable to overcome themselves. And one should not put forward prohibitive requirements on this matter, it is better to come up with activities that will help correct these shortcomings.

Children are very observant and cunning. They quickly understand that their kisses and hugs please you, and therefore will try to use them to achieve lawful violation of some rules or avoid deserved punishment, and then in case of success will take this tactic as their rule. One should not reject their caresses, but at the same time should be strict and principled.

Cunning can also manifest itself in the fact that, having received a prohibition on something from mother, the son runs to father and asks his permission for what mother forbade, without telling his dad about this. And if father allowed it, then he forgets mother's prohibitions and goes to do what dad allowed. As a result, parents have a conflict in which they understand that they were deceived. Such actions must be stopped by asking what the other parent says about this, and making it clear that if mother forbade it, then there is no need

to ask for father's permission. This is cunning and deceit, which will be punished.

Also, it is necessary to gently explain to the child that they obey parents not because they want it that way, but because they too are obedient to higher God's authority. And their children are a gift from God, who was given to them for proper upbringing. Children very much like to hear about what the Bible says about children, and about how these children behave in their young years. Understanding that there is higher authority over their parents, they want to understand the requirements of this authority, in order to then determine how obedient their parents are to God. And be sure that your child will not remain silent when they see how you violate God's law and do not attach importance to this. If such reproof takes place, then under no circumstances should you reproach the child for their just statements. It is worth acknowledging your mistake aloud and changing something in your life. After all, God uses your children for your salvation as well. In case you say that it is not for them to teach you, you drop your and God's authority, and the fruits of such influence will be very bitter.

Children understand the language of love, but are very sensitive to injustice.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Col. 4:6; Prov. 4:1-6; 15:1; 31:26-28; Isa. 42:1-4; 46:3-4; 49:15; Rom. 12:9-10; 1 Thess. 2:7; 1 Tim. 3:2-5; Heb. 5:13-14 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What is a gentle tongue, and why does it break a bone?
5. Does everyone like respectful and polite treatment?
6. Why do children respond more willingly to requests than to orders?
7. What power is hidden in calmness and gentle attitude?
8. How does the Lord raise us? Is He gentle with us?
9. Has the Lord revealed Himself to you as a gentle whisper of wind? 1 Kings 19:11-12.

10. Is a gentle tongue something that every parent possesses, or is it a character trait that reflects the state of the heart?
11. Is a gentle tongue a gift of the Holy Spirit?
12. How do children know that gentleness is good, and a harsh or abusive voice is bad?
13. Is loud talking an expression of indignation?
14. What is the victory of love and gentleness?

Obedience in General

The character of each of us consists of many elements of harmonious combination of spiritual, mental and physical features, which when interacting with each other, falling under influence coming both from outside and from within, form in us a certain way of thinking and feeling, which subsequently affects our external behavior and forms our worldview. Our character consists of a large number of many separate links of one long chain, on which we are suspended over an abyss called "worldly temptations," and the top of this chain is attached to an invisible God's hand, which wants to carry us over this world along a path called "life" and bring us to the final destination called "Kingdom of Heaven." The strength of this chain is determined by its weakest link.

The task of all parents includes both the formation of their own characters for Eternal Life, and the formation of appropriate characters in their children, to teach them to distinguish good from evil and choose the good path. In this formation process, both parents and children participate, as well as Representatives of the spiritual world, whom we invite to help with our choices and prayers.

When speaking of the chain that God holds in His hand, carrying it over the temptations of the world, it should be taken into account that God's second hand is always under this chain, so that in case of a break in one of the links, no catastrophe of the whole life occurs, and while the torn link is being repaired, the soul can rest in the reliable hand of the loving Creator, although it has the freedom to jump into the raging world and perish there forever.

Raising obedient children requires from their parents similar obedience to higher Heavenly authority and voluntary submission of their will to Christ's will.

If a small child is inclined to disobedience in some cases, then their parents should not allow them to constantly commit the same wrong actions, since frequent repetition of something

forms a habit that subsequently becomes part of character. Violation is determined by rules of behavior that father or mother establishes and voices. And if they see that the child unconsciously does something wrong, but does not yet understand this, and parents do not know how to forbid this, then it is best to occupy the little person with work in which they will be interested to be obedient, and they will willingly engage in useful things and receive praise and approval from parents as a reward. Good deeds also become a habit, and their encouragement produces happiness hormones in the child's body, filling their life with meaning.

When a child has already learned to speak and can analyze their actions, then it is necessary to talk with them in your native language, which is customary to speak in your house, to explain to them the beauty of obedience and lead them to the point where they themselves give negative assessment to wrong actions. Stories about obedient and disobedient boys and girls are very pleasing to children, and they gladly condemn all disobedience and pass fair sentences on violators of behavioral rules.

When a child can distinguish good from evil themselves, then in this sphere it is easy for parents to achieve obedience through the example of the child's assessment of various actions from children's stories.

Young children are characterized by obedience, since parents are the only instructors and indisputable authority for them. And they obey by default, because that is what their dad and mom want. But the older children become, the more they need explanation of why sin is evil, and what consequences disobedience brings both to parents' will and to God's will. And when the opportunity arises, children themselves must reap the fruits of their wrong choice and bear the consequences of violating rules and laws.

Even with the most correct upbringing, situations always arise when a child stumbles or does something wrong. This can happen under the influence of peers or from a desire to try something forbidden. One should not leave all noticed violations

without attention, but wisdom is needed to correct mistakes and offer a better alternative.

It is good from early childhood to accustom a child to tell everything bad and good that happens to them, without punishing them for honesty. Children trust their parents and are not afraid of them when they listen to their confessions and stories with interest. When a child understands that they will not be reproached or punished for their honesty, and subsequently parents will not harm them, then they will develop the habit of sharing everything and will be open to hearing the opinion of father or mother. And the older the child, the more terrible things they will tell you. But make it your rule to never reproach or scold a child for honesty and sincerity. One or two wrong steps on your part or reproach for wrong behavior that they do not hide from you can close their heart, and they will be partially truthful, or may forever withdraw into themselves and tell you nothing.

Such practice of parental self-control should develop much earlier, before the child is born, when mother and father learn to be truthful with each other and not "nag" each other for honesty and sincerity. If they do not have this between themselves, then such spirit will manifest itself in relationships with children, and it will be easier for the child to go the path of least resistance and not tell about their experiences in order to avoid condemnation or punishment.

And if mother discovered dishonesty or some secret sin of her charges, then she needs to have special wisdom to explain a different approach to life and make the child understand how one can fight sin and overcome it. One should not scold the child in this case.

Screaming, reproaches, indignation, anger, threats of violence are like sudden devastating hail that beats down tender greenery and kills young plants at the root. After such spontaneous manifestations of your indignation, you can long regret your reaction, but little can be corrected in reviving trampled tender feelings. Although children can provoke

parents' indignation and righteous anger, here it is necessary to show self-control, which should also be taught to the child.

Obedience is the foundation for further building and formation of a person's personality, but this is not the only task that parents should solve in their relationships with children.

If a child shows disobedience due to forgetfulness or misunderstanding of why this needs to be done, then one should not focus attention and defend one's authority. You are respected as a parent, but must also understand the fairness of your requirements. For example, children are inclined to eat with unwashed hands. And they do not always understand why they need to wash their hands before eating when they are not dirty. And sometimes they simply forget this because they consider it something secondary. Here one needs to have a tactful approach to instill this skill in the child and not punish them for forgetfulness. After all, we ourselves, being adults, violate this rule. And Jesus Himself taught that it is not a sin to eat with unwashed hands. Matt. 15:20.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Prov. 22:6; Col. 3:20; Rom. 6:16; Isa. 29:23-24; 46:3-4; Deut. 6:4-9; 1 Sam. 15:22-23; 2 Cor. 10:4-6; Prov. 8:32-36; Matt. 15:1-2,19-20 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. Why will habits instilled in a child from childhood be preserved by them until old age?
5. What qualities of soul should parents possess to raise worthy children?
6. What to do if a child does not understand what you want from them, and unconsciously violates your instructions?
7. Is it worth understanding whether you are dealing with a healthy child or one who has impairments in perceiving your words?
8. Does the Lord understand how damaged the mind of those who come to Him is? Does He raise everyone the same way?
9. What skills and character traits are fundamental in forming Christian character in children?

10. What to do if children squeeze all strength out of me, and there is not enough patience to cope with them?
11. What other rules, besides washing hands, can children violate unconsciously?
12. Why should obedience come from the child's heart and become their good habit?
13. Do parents need wisdom from above to raise an obedient child?
14. Where to get wisdom in raising children after asking God for it?

Self-Control

Self-control is a child's ability to control their passions, appetite, instincts, emotions and negative feelings in difficult stressful situations that may arise within the heart or come from outside. This is conscious control of one's behavior, based on a clear understanding of what is happening, and the ability to manage one's reaction, making a choice in favor of good, which they were taught by their parents.

Self-control is not an innate property of the soul, but it is that important character trait that is instilled in the parental home from early years of life and consistently developed and formed in an atmosphere of love. In fear of punishment, screaming or accusation, the child's will becomes constrained, and this hinders the natural development of many useful qualities of the soul.

It is written in Prov. 16:32: "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city." Self-control distinguishes humans from animals and speaks of the supremacy in their character of will and reason over base qualities of the soul. Self-control is a fundamental principle that should be laid by parents from the moment of birth and developed under their control.

The personal example of father and mother in their patient and principled behavior is the best model for imitation, and it is easy for children to understand what their parents want from them. One can demand from a child what one does not possess oneself, but it is unlikely that the expected result will be achieved.

Our child, like ourselves, is subject to attacks from internal carnal influences. They are also open to external attacks from various sources, and our task includes teaching this little person in a spirit of patience, forgiveness and self-possession. This quality of soul does not arise naturally if parents do not control children's behavior and explain how it is better to behave in one case or another.

There are children who are naturally calm and less susceptible to stressful situations, but they too need wise instruction. Very active and curious children face much greater trials of their patience and must be under constant supervision of their guardians.

Teaching a child self-control is a lengthy process that requires parental experience, patience and wisdom from above. All this is necessary to make one's child a worthy citizen of both earthly and Heavenly Kingdom.

The very first lessons of upbringing begin from the moment of the baby's birth through caring for their physical needs. An established routine of feeding, bathing, changing clothes has proper influence and brings into the infant's mind awareness of stability on which they can count. This accustoms them to submit to circumstances and show patience in allowing care for themselves. And the gentle tone of voice of their parents brings the child's emotional world into harmony with the world of their father and mother. Gentle direction of the baby's desires and whims accustoms them to submission to parental will. This lays the foundation for subsequent lessons in self-control.

Unconditional parental love and their principled approach to established orders and daily routine protect the little person from unnecessary fears and give them freedom for full and comprehensive creative development.

Parental example stands at the foundation of upbringing, and the home atmosphere of love has its influence on the infant's mind from the first days of life. Although the child does not yet understand the meaning of words, they sense the atmosphere of love, respect and self-control of their parents and siblings. The spirit of relationships is transmitted to them, and they feel safe, which brings peace.

Parents should voice the child's negative emotions, calling them by name and giving them negative assessment. For example: "You are angry now, and this is sin." Or: "You are upset. Let's establish the cause and figure out where this came from." Although the child may be capricious in response to such

statements, a wise approach will have proper influence, and next time these instructions will come to their memory.

If I know how to overcome another negative emotion in one situation or another, then I can present my experience of victory to the child as well, explaining to them how I overcome irritation when something similar happens in my life. The presence of humor and good nature in my words will be able to capture children's attention much faster and help them learn lessons of restraint, and my experience of victory will remain forever in the memory of the young student and help them in the next trial, when I explain what ways of expressing emotions are acceptable in my life and which are not.

One should not idealize oneself, but one needs to admit that there were mistakes in my life too, when I was learning self-control, and therefore I understand what is happening in the child's heart.

Praise, encouragement and joy over another victory of good over the child's evil feelings will strengthen them in this victory and inspire future overcoming of obstacles and formation of this skill.

It is always better to teach children victories before the battle comes. This can be done in the form of a game or lively discussion, where it is necessary to lead the little ones with your questions to the right answer, so that they themselves say what reaction would be better, and explain why it would be good this way and not otherwise. The habit of discussing various reactions to emotions in advance will help recognize temptation and resist it.

It is also necessary to teach children to develop patience and postpone their reaction until their turn comes. This helps abstain from instant reactions and plan responses with the prospect of more significant results.

Changing the type of activity can also instill the habit of replacing negative reaction with more useful work and divert consciousness to more significant things.

Prayer plays a huge role in teaching self-control, awareness of Divine intervention in the situation and faith in help from above. We are only co-workers with God, to whom He has entrusted the upbringing of a worthy person. Without us He will do nothing, and without Him we cannot resist the forces of evil in this world. But the most important thing we can do for our children is to teach them to have personal relationships with Christ and learn good manners from the Savior Himself, turning to Him for help and achieving victories with Him.

Repeatedly I have witnessed when our little daughter would bow in prayer and ask Jesus to help her with her little questions, and then joyfully share with us how the Lord answered her prayers. And the Lord really answers and has fellowship with children who turn to Him with faith and ask Him for much.

We and God are that force before which no child can resist, but this force does not cripple the child's will, but forms it in harmony with God's principles and features of parental influence.

Explain to your children that all evil comes from the enemy of the soul and that with God's help one can resist this influence and achieve victory.

Examples from the childhood and youth of Jesus and how He overcame all sin also help our children act and react accordingly. Children want to be like those they look up to, so let their parents and God be the best example for them to follow.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Gal. 5:22; Deut. 6:4-9; Ex. 34:6; Ps. 86:15; Prov. 14:29; 15:18; 16:32; Eccl. 7:8; Lam. 3:26; Luke 8:15; 21:19 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What is self-control?
5. Are self-control and patience the same thing, or are there differences?

6. Give examples of Jesus's self-control?
7. Is self-control an innate character trait?
8. Can it be considered correct that life itself will teach a child to control their spirit?
9. In what spheres of life can self-control help us?
10. If I see a spirit of intemperance in myself, should I start learning self-control?
11. What benefit does a patient spirit bring?
12. Why is it written about love that it is long-suffering (1 Cor. 13:4)? Is this really so?
13. What to do if something or someone irritates me and drives me out of myself?
14. Why is parents' reaction to one event or another a convincing example for their children to follow?

Personal Example of Self-Control

The biggest mistake in the incorrect formation of a child's character is the behavior of the parents themselves. A child, although inheriting some carnal inclinations from nature, does not have life experience for their conscious application, and when certain conditions are created for the manifestation of children's selfishness, they will not be slow to appear. If parents, due to their incompetence or busyness, do not pay attention to the clearly expressed negative emotions of their child, then these carnal inclinations very quickly establish themselves in the consciousness of the little person, and then they are quite difficult, and sometimes impossible to eradicate.

The best and main example of teaching self-control is the life of father and mother and their reaction to one irritant or another. Before teaching a child some good manners, it is necessary to accept them oneself or at least know what they are and what is needed for this. Children, without realizing it, become teachers of their parents, forcing the latter to engage in more careful study of upbringing issues and change many of their negative habits so as not to pass this spirit on to their children.

Observing young families throughout life, I noticed how the character of newlyweds changes when children appear in their family. Girls, becoming mothers, gain more wisdom and prudence. They thoughtfully approach solving many problems, and their heart and attention are always where their child is. Sometimes you mentally wish many superficial girls would give birth soon, because this event will help them reevaluate and change much in their lives.

We adults are inclined to make many decisions impulsively, but impulse clearly demonstrates the absence of self-control and reason in such an approach. Our war with the spirits of wickedness in heavenly places has a completely different nature and tactics of victory. The good influence that one wanted to exert with one's response is very quickly neutralized by the presence of an unclean spirit, which constantly offers its carnal services with quick results. But one should think and look into

the future. Will a quick "victory" here and now bring blessing to the subsequent life of the child and their parents?

Loud voice, screaming, irritation are clear manifestations of an unclean spirit with which parents try to solve complex problems in raising children. But this breaks the child's will and teaches them similar behavior, which may not manifest immediately. Have you met irritable and hot-tempered people? If you try to understand the root cause of such their attitude to life, then most likely the beginning of this was laid in the parental home. They even say, if you want to understand what your bride will be like, look at her mother's behavior.

Also, calm and prudent people did not become so by nature. They were made so by the upbringing of their wise parents. Of course, one should not discard the influence of bad associations, worldly schools and peers, but the example of father and mother forms the basis and lays the foundation for further behavior.

And to avoid negative consequences, parents should start with themselves and with relationships between themselves.

A quiet and calm voice, having firmness and confidence in intonation, is the most effective means in addressing a child's reason. Sometimes this voice can reach a whisper, but pursue a specific goal—to solve the problem by God's method of influence. Unconditional love also sounds in the mother's voice, and the child hears this with their heart, although they may be under the influence of another spirit.

Such a communication skill is quickly absorbed by young consciousness and forms a habit of obedience and imitation. And after the storm, when parents begin to explain how well-behaved children should behave, it is not difficult for the child to understand what is expected of them, because they have an example of their parents' self-control.

No matter how we protect our children from mistakes, there will always be moments when they break, smash or spoil something without malicious intent. My wife and I discussed these issues and decided not to scold our daughter for such

things, but to react calmly and bear the material consequences of such cases. And there were plenty of them both due to our lack of foresight and due to our daughter's excessive activity. And the first impulse was the desire to shout loudly: "How could you!!!" But we had to restrain our emotions and look for the cause in ourselves: "How did I allow the child to do this?" For example, a glass with a drink was placed on the edge of the table in a zone where the child could easily hit it. Or when shopping in the store, the stroller with the child was very close to the counter with vases. The noise from breaking dishes was audible to our daughter too, and she was always very interested to observe how beautiful objects beautifully flew to the floor and turned into beautiful piles of garbage. And we had to become acrobats to save another object from the trash, and then we had to explain that this is "oh-oh-oh," and one needs to be more careful. Sometimes our patience could not stand it, and we had to go to another room to come to our senses. But we were learning self-control, not yet understanding how important it is to show it in upbringing.

No matter how it may seem to you that your self-control was in vain, and you needed to sharply stop the child's wrong behavior, be sure that the good seed of your calmness example sown will bring good fruit in its time and provide invaluable help in the future. A good example is also very contagious and implies logical explanation of your behavior. Showing calmness and restraint, a parent should look not at the current situation, but at how this influence will be useful in the future, and what blessings it will bring in many years.

While the child has not yet learned to speak, children's crying or weeping is their natural communication with their parents. Father and mother need to learn to distinguish these sounds and understand their cause. If this is caused by their legitimate needs, then they should be satisfied immediately. If this is related to pain, then this needs to be seen. If crying is caused by whim or self-will, then it is necessary to react correctly to this. This is also the first lessons in self-control.

The baby's crying does not please their parents, and attempts are immediately made to neutralize this noise. But the child is very perceptive, and if they understand that in this way they can achieve their goals, they will begin to manipulate their parents, and the parents will simply have nowhere to go, believing that prolonged crying cripples the child's psyche.

Initially, when raising their voice loudly, the child does not plan to manipulate parents, but seeing their reaction, they take note that this is an effective means for achieving the desired, and begin to strengthen their influence, losing control over themselves. Here parental understanding of the child's true needs and correct reaction to such expression of will is necessary.

For a child, their crying is an effort that they need to apply to get what they need. If a small effort is not enough, then it needs to be multiplied. And they came to this based on previous experience of getting what they wanted. And parents wonder where this comes from.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read James 1:5-7; Prov. 7:32-33; 19:8; Luke 9:39; Eph. 4:30-32; Ex. 2:6; Ps. 84:7; Matt. 5:4; Luke 7:13; Col. 3:20; 1 Pet. 1:14; Rev. 21:4 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. Is a child's crying or weeping something negative that needs to be fought?
5. What do you experience when you hear the crying of other people's children who disturb your peaceful life?
6. Do you think Jesus cried and screamed when He was an Infant?
7. Do you think heaven sees us as crying and screaming children?
8. Does the Lord carry us in His arms when we begin to be capricious and cry?
9. Why does a child's crying sometimes get out of their control and turn into hysteria that is difficult to stop?
10. Do you have experience of how to fight a child's hysteria?

11. Do children throw tantrums in families where dictatorship and violence reign?
12. Does the Lord help find the best solution in comforting a child when all usual methods don't help?
13. What will happen to a child if parents satisfy all their whims?
14. What do you experience when you see how other people's children stage public concerts, and their parents indulge them and make concessions?
15. Did you see in this a hint about us as spiritual children in our relationship to Heaven?

Self-Control in Appetite

The foundation of forming Christian character in children is training appetite. Appetite is a natural instinct placed in humans by the Creator to sustain the body with necessary energy obtained from food and water. Appetite is a lower force of the soul and must be under absolute control of reason and will. If proper attention is not paid to this quality, then the child's appetite will take power into its own hands and will control the higher forces of the soul according to its own desire and taste.

Training a child in the area of appetite begins with training abstinence, tastes and habits in their parents, especially in the mother. Ignorance in understanding the importance of proper formation of children's appetite leads parents to take an easy and convenient path, which ultimately leads their child to serious consequences.

Since the human body is closely connected with their spirit and soul, one needs to consider and take into account everything that strengthens this connection and what destroys it. I think that even the most ignorant parents' plans do not include raising a drunkard or drug addict, but it is precisely the formation of proper taste and appetite or the lack thereof that lays the foundation for all future troubles and blessings. And parents need to start with themselves in this matter. Their personal example in the sphere of abstinence and order will have greater influence when their appetite is under absolute control of their will and reason.

The nutrition of a pregnant mother, food quality and the regimen of taking healthy products—all this directly affects the formation of the fetus inside the womb. Already at this time, love for order and abstinence is being laid. Although pregnancy time may influence the formation of some inclinations in the child's taste, the main influence and training of appetite still occurs after birth.

If immediately after birth an infant is brought to the mother's breast, they already know what they need to do and begin to suck what is offered to them. Many parents, knowing this natural instinct, give the infant a pacifier and see how they calm down, having received something substantial that satisfies their instinct.

The child's appetite, given to them by God, needs natural food that the mother's body naturally produces in her breast. Milk is formed based on what the mother eats and drinks, what light falls on her skin, what she breathes and in what environment she is. At the same time, the mother studies her child and establishes feeding times. There are no identical children, and although they all have different features in taking food, there are general principles that need to be known and considered when feeding. It should not be continuous when the child is awake, but should have specific hours. The child's body very quickly forms a nutrition schedule and loudly reminds that the time has come, which cannot be missed in any way.

In my life there was a case when I took my month-old daughter for a walk in a stroller in fresh air, thinking that oxygen would have a sedating effect on her. But exactly when feeding time came, she began to cry, asking for her due nutrition. I tried to calm her, explaining that we were walking and mom was not nearby, but she would not calm down and demanded her due. And even when mom came out to meet us, the daughter did not calm down until she received her rightful portion of milk. I understood that arguing with hungry children is useless, and took this as a note.

The older the child becomes, the longer pauses in food intake are necessary, while also increasing the amount of milk itself. Water or herbal tea should also be present in the infant's diet to replenish the body's deficit of necessary fluid, and sometimes replace premature feeding.

A mother's intuition suggests solutions to all these questions, but it would be good to also know a sensible approach to this process. For example, a child experiences internal discomfort and expresses this aloud, and they are immediately given food

without understanding their true needs. Appetite quickly gets used to such reaction and demands food on time and not on time. As a result, the sense of taste begins to dominate over common sense and nutrition schedule, and much more patience, strength and courage will be needed to overcome this vice and subordinate appetite to accepted norms.

A child's body very quickly adapts to the order or disorder in nutrition that parents arrange. For some, establishing a nutrition regimen occurs easily and naturally, while some mothers need to overcome their internal fears to be principled in this matter.

When a child turns six months old, besides milk, they need to be given additional complementary feeding, using healthy vegetables and fruits in the form of puree, considering that the child does not yet know how to chew independently.

Parents' mistake can also be that as their child grows, they decide that they are big enough and can eat the same food that they themselves eat. But although children have a mechanism for quick digestion of food, they are still very small to thoroughly chew and digest what is heavy for the children's body. Even food that is healthy for parents can be unacceptable for the children's digestive system and harm the whole body. And if this is not visible to the naked eye, then the consequences of such nutrition will make themselves known later, and parents are unlikely to remember their common meals, seeing in them the cause of intemperance or damaged health. Common nutrition saves time for food preparation and is very convenient, but this does not mean it is beneficial for the baby. Here special wisdom from above is needed for choosing age-appropriate nutrition and its preparation.

There is a delusion that can strongly influence the consciousness of inexperienced parents when they are told that someone's children ate what their parents ate and grew up healthy. Let such people bear consequences in their families, but may you have common sense in everything.

Small children often are capricious and experience various stresses, for the solution of which they naturally run to parents, and instead of understanding the child's need, mom shoves another treat in their mouth. Such solution to difficult situations forms in the child's mind a habit of eating away their problems, which they will subsequently do consciously and constantly.

Much has already been said about the harm of snacking between meals, but for some reason this problem remains relevant for many to this day, and some see no problems in this.

In my childhood, adults taught me that what got into the mouth was beneficial. And I believed this. But the time came when common sense began to show me another side of life, and the Lord began to destroy accepted stereotypes.

The most beneficial nutrition for a child is what nature itself prepared, starting from mother's milk and including vegetables, berries and fruits. Modern industry is focused on obtaining maximum profit with minimum costs, so products are stored for a long time. One should not trust manufacturers with care for the tastes and health of your children. Prepare food yourself.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Eccl. 5:11; 9:16-17; Isa. 22:13-14; 66:17; Prov. 23:20-21; 25:16; Ezek. 16:49; Luke 6:25; Num. 6:2-4; 2 Pet. 1:6 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What is training appetite?
5. Do you think eating habits acquired in childhood will affect subsequent life?
6. From what age can one begin practicing abstinence?
7. What is abstinence?
8. Do you think it is difficult for an infant to learn self-control in nutrition?
9. What benefit will parents have from their child eating only healthy food on schedule?
10. Should one instruct a child in correct nutrition principles when one violates them oneself?

11. Why does training another begin with oneself?
12. What to do if I now understood these important truths about abstinence in food, but before this ate carelessly?
13. Can a mother's fears about her child's starvation prevent her from having firm principles in feeding an infant?
14. Is there anything in common between an infant and you in the matter of training appetite?

Formation of Appetite

The formation of Christian character in the area of a child's appetite is one of the most complex and interesting tasks. We parents deal not only with a little person, but also with their carnal nature, the influence of the world and environment, with attacks from the enemy of the soul, who unleashes their temptations on our children, wanting to make them slaves of base inclinations of the soul and through this have access to their will.

One should not forget that the very first sin was committed under the influence of human appetite, and what catastrophic consequences intemperance led to! But God did not give up and offers all people His help and wisdom in this struggle, knowing what forces parents face.

Many features in a child's nutrition depend not only on their desire and appetite, but also stem from understanding, worldview and agreement of parents in this sphere. An infant does not yet know what is good and what is bad, but seeing order and norm in nutrition, accepts this as a matter of course. They have their own internal limiters and their own needs, about which they can loudly declare and make everyone understand what they like and what they don't.

If a child refuses some healthy and ordinary food, then father or mother should not panic and look for a replacement so that their child eats something. A child may refuse any food according to their internal feelings, but if they receive a replacement, then their mind notes this for itself, and next time they may try to consciously refuse in order to get something else. Here wisdom and intuition of parents is needed to understand the baby's true motives. If the food is usual, quality and healthy, then one should not panic, but wait a little and offer it again. One can come up with an interesting comment about the next portion or show how tasty it is to you. And if this did not work, then finish the meal until next time, not replacing it with something more tasty.

If there are several dishes on the table, and the child can choose what they eat first and what later, then it's not terrible if they won't eat food they don't like. But after their refusal of food, one cannot bring something else from the side so they eat. Children do not understand that diet should be varied. They are accustomed from childhood to sucking the same mother's milk, and therefore when they receive the same porridge, this does not outrage them.

Sometimes due to their busyness, a child simply doesn't want anything. Or if they drank a lot of water, then they see no point in food. The stomach gives a signal about its fullness, and there is refusal of food. Parents need to understand the reason for refusal and watch that children drink nothing right before eating.

A baby busy with affairs may miss from attention that they need to eat, and consider lunch time something unimportant. But the taste of food that mom will let them try will remind them of this event, and they will willingly open their mouth for the next portion.

When parents remove food until next time in response to refusal to eat, then they should convey to the child's consciousness that they will receive nothing, since lunch is on schedule. The baby may later come to their senses and start asking for food, but here parents' wisdom is needed not to accustom the child to self-will, but to make them understand that there is order in the house.

During illness, children may refuse any food for extended periods. One should not fear this. Such functions are embedded in the body that protect it from unnecessary overloads so it can restore order itself. Appetite will definitely return when immunity performs its work.

Visiting friends or joint dinners at church can be exceptions in the baby's daily routine, and this can strongly influence young consciousness, destroying the usual schedule. While the child is small, a mother, foreseeing such situations, should take familiar children's food with her and feed her child separately. If this is

impossible, then it is necessary to discuss the menu and schedule of your feeding in advance so that friends relate to your principles with understanding.

Although separate meetings do not violate home order, they introduce into the child's life a new vision of the world and possibilities that they remember. No matter how interesting the meeting with friends may be, parents' attention should be with their child and their activities. But when vacation time or long-term trips from home come, the children's feeding regimen should not be changed to accommodate temporary change of environment.

Great harm to training a child's appetite can be caused by the closest people. Our parents sometimes love our children more than us and are ready to give them everything best and expensive that they did not spoil their own children with. Before giving them your child for temporary care, it is worth making sure that their nutrition principles do not diverge from yours, and that you are the main manager in raising your son or daughter. Children do not always tell how and what they were fed, and parents may hide the whole truth, so all these questions should be seriously discussed in advance.

I know one family where a mother, going on vacation with her three-year-old daughter, ended up in the hospital with appendicitis, and the daughter was taken by an unbelieving mother-in-law for the time of the mother's hospital stay. For more than a week she was with her granddaughter at her home and accustomed her to her rules. Knowing the parents' principles, she decided to feed the girl what she herself ate, including unclean food, which she then boasted about, declaring that no one died, and the child was satisfied eating "normal" food. The girl's parents were very saddened by such a situation and then never gave their daughter into their mother's care.

Even if your grandson is your direct relative, one should always remember that their parents are above you and bear responsibility before God for raising their child. Therefore, before taking anyone from them, it is necessary to learn the

order and principles of their family, especially in feeding, and adapt these principles to yourself, not the other way around.

Spoiling a child's appetite and breaking all their principles can be done very quickly, but to raise a worthy person requires persistent work, steadfastness, patience and many prayers.

There is another vice that can very often be observed in church. When you come to worship with your children, who are dressed in their best clothes and are very elegant, causing tenderness among the brethren, then "good people" are found who stock up on tasty candies and begin to treat your child with them without your permission. And where can children go? They joyfully take everything they are given. And there are such brethren who even unwrap these candies and try to shove them directly into your baby's mouth. What to do in such cases? We usually took these "gifts" from the child's hands and thanked for the treat, and then talked with these compassionate people and politely asked them not to do this, since we don't like it and it contradicts our principles. Some listened to us with understanding, while others were offended, but we were strict in this matter and did not make a dining room with exquisite delicacies out of worship. And our nutrition schedule was built so that no meals fell during worship times, except for breastfeeding.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read 1 Cor. 8:8,13; 10:3; Isa. 7:14-15; Heb. 5:12-14; Judg. 13:3-4; Prov. 22:6; 23:1-3; Luke 1:13-15; 24:41-43; Rom. 14:15-17; Ps. 78:29-33 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. Why is formation of proper appetite in children so important?
5. What consequences does intemperance or ignorance in food carry?
6. Why do small children always look for opportunity to switch to wrong nutrition, as long as it's tasty?
7. What role does the hormone dopamine play in nutrition?

8. Why when a child refuses healthy and tasty food, cannot it be replaced with other food?
9. Can a mother's fear that her child won't eat force her to make concessions to her baby's whims and feed them what they demand?
10. What to do if a child wants to eat only candies and throws away everything else?
11. Why is it easier to instill proper taste and discipline in food intake to a small child than to an adult?
12. Can you call your food tasty, healthy and corresponding to health reform?
13. What to do if the child's appetite is already spoiled, and this problem only now became clear to me?
14. What role does parents' prayer play in forming appetite in a child?

Culture of Nutrition

Unity in principles of forming Christian character in a child begins long before their appearance. Foundations and understanding of holiness are laid in parents' hearts even before they became adults and met each other. Choice of life companion, unity of mind, personal obedience to God also lay the correct foundation for successful upbringing of the future generation.

It is good to have developed intuition and ability to foresee many dangers when forming personality, but at the same time it is necessary to possess knowledge of what and how to do, and what should be avoided when developing a young personality for preparation for life in Heavenly abodes. My family's experience is insufficient to delve into child psychology and learn the laws of interaction of their soul with the external and internal world. Although worldly sources of information include much useful knowledge, they do not teach how to attach the child's soul to Christ and help children have personal relationships with their Savior.

If we do not have spiritual unity in our family, or our family hierarchy is composed incorrectly, then in the matter of raising children we will not have that unity that creates authority for father and mother in the child's eyes. A mother constantly arguing with her husband in the presence of young witnesses will not possess authority among her household members, and it will be difficult for them to respect their father with such an approach. We read in Job 14:4: "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? No one!"

A friendly spirit between spouses is transmitted to their offspring as well. Family, discipline and order are not only a set of rules, but also relationships, communication, mutual respect and honoring of another's opinion and desires.

A mother, preparing food for a child, is guided not only by the feeding schedule, but also by understanding of their child's

physical needs. She considers their tastes and age. She teaches children to trust her in this matter.

When the whole family sits together at the table whenever possible and thanks God for everything He gives them for food, then something interesting happens in the spiritual unity of all members. And further communication at the table forms the special atmosphere of this home. Not all table conversations can have religious character, but family members' love for each other gives special taste to any chosen topic. Joy and mutual attachment make any meal a celebration. And tasty and healthy food gives such communication a special atmosphere of friendliness, in which it is very useful to share wise instructions, instill culture of behavior and teach children self-control.

When a child is just learning to eat independently, they get dirty themselves and dirty all the space around them. For this event, parents prepare special clothes and put on an apron. But time passes, and skill in taking food contributes to the child eating more neatly and having a concept of cleanliness.

Each culture has its own traditions and etiquette regarding food intake, and it should be considered and instilled in one's children. Somewhere they eat with hands, somewhere with chopsticks, somewhere sitting on the floor, and we are accustomed to eating at the table with knife, spoon and fork. At the same time, we use napkins for wiping the mouth and set separate dishes for food waste and wrappers. Sometimes for dinner we turned off the lights and lit candles. But this was more exception than rule, and brought special joy and romance to our communication at the table.

A child likes to imitate their parents and willingly learns what they see in their behavior. Cleanliness also pleases children. Although they do not immediately and reluctantly master this science, time passes and they begin to see dirt themselves and know how to fight it.

We do not apply disciplinary sanctions in the area of nutrition. Our daughter is not taught that for bad behavior she will be

deprived of something tasty or useful. Also, we do not offer delicacies as encouragement for some successes. Food in our house is not a special privilege that needs to be earned or that can be not received for violating order.

We also watch that the child does not overeat even healthy products. Although sometimes special treats appear at our table that quickly disappear, we watch that they are in moderation, and therefore try not to put abundance of everything in excess on the table, but put as much food as needed. If the child wants to get an additional portion of soup, this means they will eat less of other dishes.

But we do not monitor the taste and measure of our guests. In this case, we let them choose dishes and amount of food themselves.

Sometimes my wife asks our daughter what she would like to eat for lunch, and then prepares these dishes together with her. But basically menu composition lies in the mother's power, and she herself decides what and when other family members eat. And if the daughter demands something else, she is made to understand that her wishes will be considered next time, and now she needs to eat what is prepared.

Usually children very much like to eat dishes they prepared themselves. And when you explain at the table what benefit this or that product brings, they accept this with understanding and then tell guests what healthy dishes are on their table. When tasting various products, we try to explain how they combine and what is better to eat separately. While our daughter was small, this was not necessary, but when she began to understand more, we explained to her why something absolutely cannot be eaten and why some healthy products are incompatible with each other. And it must be said that our daughter very carefully watched how much we ourselves adhered to these rules and immediately raised a fuss when she saw that we were eating something incompatible.

From early childhood we taught our daughter that Coca-Cola is a bad drink, and she never even tried it, but considered it

something bitter. But once our brethren invited us to a wedding. In the midst of the wedding celebration, our daughter ran up to us and informed us that it turns out Coca-Cola is so tasty. Other children let her try this. We then had to explain for a long time that not everything tasty is useful, and that besides sugar, other harmful substances are contained there. And this drink was never in our house.

Also, the process of learning nutrition culture included the concept of respect for other people, especially elders. We taught our daughter that when choosing products, one should always yield to others and wait until they take what they need, and then give one's plate. The exception was only the moment when she was allowed to take something first.

Polite words, thanking God for food, gratitude to those who prepared and served it—all this must be instilled in children from early years so they understand that food is not self-evident, but someone's care for you, for which one needs to be grateful, respecting people's labor.

But we did not put food and its taste on a pedestal, giving it special attention, making these products the main topic of our table conversations. We always had something to talk about in the friendly atmosphere of our home. And when we had birthdays, then we always prepared a special dish for this day that we did not eat on other days. And the Lord always received gratitude from us for everything we ate and drank.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Rom. 14:17; 1 Sam. 2:12-17; Matt. 6:31-33; Prov. 4:1-2; 8:32-36; 20:7; 31:14-15,27-28; 1 Tim. 3:2-5,12; Ps. 127:1-5; 1 Cor. 14:20; Eph. 6:1-4 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. Should a child be instilled with good table manners?
5. Should one keep in mind that the family always gathers together at the table three times a day, and this should be special time for the family?

6. Does the fact that mother decides what, when and in what quantity to eat teach the child self-control?
7. What does the story of Eli's sons from 1 Sam. 2:12-17 teach us? What lesson can be extracted from reading 1 Sam. 4:11?
8. What will intemperance in food lead a child to, and what consequences await their parents?
9. What to do if everything in my family is not going as well as described in this lesson?
10. Should one watch that harmful food and drinks never appear on your table?
11. Why should food not be made into a cult or means for encouragement or punishment?
12. Do joint meals bring the family closer?
13. Why, when people get acquainted, do they spend much time at the table somewhere in a restaurant?
14. Should one sometimes bring romance into joint meals? If yes, what does this give?

Habit of Cleanliness and Hygiene

When a person is born into the world, they represent a wild being driven by innate instincts, but reason and development potential are already placed within them. They don't yet know how to do anything and don't understand anything, but this doesn't embarrass their parents, and they are ready to make this little person a worthy member of society who knows behavioral rules and understands the cultural features of their people.

Cleanliness and hygiene of a child include observing a number of rules and procedures aimed at maintaining health and preventing infections and diseases. This implies both personal hygiene of the child and maintaining cleanliness of the environment in which the baby is located.

Small children are not naturally inclined toward concepts of cleanliness and hygiene. And when parents begin to practice this in their lives, the little ones raise a fuss and loudly protest such intrusion into their personal space. They tend to relieve themselves right under themselves when the need arises, and quickly understand that spending time in dry underwear is much more pleasant than lying in wet diapers, about which many infants loudly inform their parents. And as a rule, mom already has spare clothes prepared, and she changes her child, observing that after changing the body is clean. Thus the first habits of cleanliness and hygiene are instilled.

Someone among wise people invented diapers that successfully replaced swaddling clothes and save enormous time and effort for many parents. We immediately appreciated such an invention and began allocating part of our family budget to buying these diapers. But the baby grows, and we begin to think about how to teach them to independently use the potty so they can relieve themselves. Usually parents begin to engage in this from the moment when the child takes their first steps. It should be noted that a diaper overflowing with urine can lead to excessive overheating of sexual organs in boys, which can

disrupt reproductive processes and lead to infertility in young years.

Bathing the baby also becomes an integral ritual of every family. Not all children initially like being immersed in water, and they desperately protest against this event, especially if the water is cold or hot. Therefore, it's good for parents to first lower their elbow into the water to determine acceptable water temperature for the body.

The approach to using cleansing products during bathing should be very competent and careful. Often this is done under the influence of advertising or beautiful packaging with pleasant smell. Read the composition of what you will wash your child with. An infant's skin absorbs everything it comes into contact with, and if chemicals get on it, this can become the cause of allergic reaction or inflammation of internal organs. The best and proven means for maintaining cleanliness is clean water. It dissolves well what it comes into contact with and washes away unnecessary dirt and sweat from the child's body, while preserving the natural fatty coating that protects the body from penetration of unnecessary bacteria.

As the child grows, they understand that bathing can bring much joy, and water is the best toy that brings so much happiness, and therefore everything around should be wet.

Washing hands and face is also part of hygiene rules, and the child is explained that dirty hands should be clean, and one should sit at the table only with washed hands.

In this case, parents themselves give an example of how to wash hands, and daily multiple repetition of this action becomes a habit for the child, and they begin to do this themselves. But one must understand that children do not yet realize the need for washing hands and may forget about this or consider their hands clean enough not to wet them once more.

I remember very well one lesson on hand washing that a counselor taught us at pioneer camp. She explained that hands need to be washed with soap twice, since the first time washes away all dirt, and the second time achieves the needed

cleanliness. And when after this you wipe your hands on a white towel, then no traces of dirt should remain on it. If the towel gets dirty, then hands need to be washed again. This lesson stuck so much in my memory that I still remember it and watch that my towel is clean.

Teeth brushing has also become a good tradition in our society. But here one also needs to be extremely careful, since small children swallow tasty toothpaste, and it's difficult for them to understand why it needs to be spit out when it's so sweet. Also, one shouldn't trust manufacturers, considering that they think about your children's health, offering only good and useful things. The safest soap, shampoo and toothpaste is what you make yourself, understanding the purity and safety for the body of necessary ingredients.

A child needs not only to be instilled with hygiene habits, but also to be explained why this needs to be done. Children are very clever and quickly begin to love cleanliness, distinguishing clean from unclean.

If a child is not taught hygiene principles in childhood, then later this will be very difficult, and sometimes impossible to instill. Carnal nature is stupid and lazy, and it avoids unnecessary movements for the sake of generally accepted norms. Therefore, instilling hygiene rules becomes a certain struggle in which parents must always win.

Washing dirty dishes should not be entrusted to a dishwasher. Children need to be instilled with this procedure skill as well.

Care for a child's nails and hair is the responsibility of parents until an older age, since babies cannot do this correctly, but they should be explained that nails on hands and feet should not be long, and hair, especially for girls, should be clean, combed and styled. Daughters quickly get used to caring for their hair and willingly let them make braids or ponytails. Also, many children like when during combing they are stroked on the head and gently talked to.

Children are inclined to dirty their clothes while walking and playing. They shouldn't be forbidden to get dirty. A small child

and dirt are two inseparable friends. One shouldn't fear this or get angry if the baby gets dirty, but should explain that dirty clothes need to be changed and washed. Children quickly grasp this rule and willingly change into clean clothes when they come home from a walk. It would be good for parents to have such clothes for walks and outdoor games that will be easy to wash.

Cleanliness in the children's room, access to fresh air and sunlight must always be maintained, explaining to children the importance of hygiene in this area. Order must be restored after each game and before going to sleep. Initially, parents teach children this order by their personal example and participation, and then, when children begin to understand this and bear responsibility for performance, they begin to demand and expect obedience from them in this sphere.

Children should also be taught that our God is a God of order and cleanliness. After all, everything is clean in Heaven, and similar behavior and arrangement of our dwellings is expected from us on earth.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Ps. 51:7; Deut. 23:12-14; John 13:4-10; Ex. 40:30-32; Lev. 11:25-26; 14:8-9; 15:7,16-18; 17:15-16; Ex. 29:4; Isa. 1:16; Ezek. 16:4 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What is cleanliness and hygiene? What is this needed for?
5. Are children born with understanding of what cleanliness is and how it must be observed?
6. From what age is it necessary to begin instilling principles of cleanliness and hygiene in children?
7. Will parents be able to teach a child what they themselves do not observe?
8. Why did the Lord give His people special commands about cleanliness and hygiene? What blessings did Israel have from this?
9. Is not washing hands before eating a sin?
10. How do you feel after washing your hands or bathing?

11. Does the principle of cleanliness and hygiene include keeping all your things and your house clean and orderly?
12. Why do children sometimes need to be forced to wash their hands and body?
13. How dangerous are chemical products when washing children's and your body? Why is it necessary to observe caution in their use or have complete abstinence?
14. How do you feel in the company of a person who hasn't washed for a long time or doesn't wash at all?

Child Punishment

No other form of upbringing causes as much dispute, contradiction and disagreement among parents as child punishment. Believing people immediately quote from memory the well-known verse from Prov. 13:24: "He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly." This is very useful advice inspired by God, which we will also consider, but this advice requires special wisdom from parents in its correct application.

Punishment is a certain form of influence on a child, through which correction of their behavior occurs, leading to obedience and performance of expected actions. It can be: — corporal, with causing physical pain; — psychological, with expression of displeasure, deserved reproaches and reprimands; — deprivation of freedom of movement, when the guilty party is put in a corner or seated on a chair; — deprivation of games, walks, entertainment, when access to these activities is closed for limited time; — natural consequence, when a child decides to touch a hot iron or kettle contrary to parents' prohibitions and becomes convinced that this is very painful; — deprivation of children's property, when a child broke their toy and doesn't receive another in return; — emotional, when parents conduct explanatory conversations, explaining what is good and what is bad; — spiritual, when children are explained God's attitude toward sin and taught to see their actions in light of the Bible.

It's important to understand that the goal of any punishment is not to cause harm to the child or humiliate them, but to help them correct their wrong behavior and understand the connection between a bad deed and its consequence.

Punishment should help the child develop self-control in their character and awaken in them natural striving for correction of their wrong desires and actions. Any punishment not corresponding to this goal is ineffective, and sometimes harmful, and can bring more harm than benefit.

It's important to distinguish forms of punishment and not make them universal for all cases. It's also necessary to consider the child's age and their understanding of what's happening.

The very first rule for determining punishment is the presence of law or established order in the family that is voiced and conveyed to young consciousness.

If you start scolding a five-month-old baby for wetting diapers and not asking for the potty that stands nearby, then this will not be a wise action on your part. This person doesn't yet have sufficiently developed reason to evaluate your requirements and follow them.

The second basic rule for parents: punishment should not be done impulsively, under the influence of "righteous anger" or in a state of irritation.

I immediately want to state that corporal punishment of a child is an extreme and undesirable measure that shouldn't be resorted to for any reason. It's important to set your heart on the desire to seek other types of discipline and influence on consciousness. Such attitudes will preserve your relationships with children from destructive consequences that can occur as a result of the situation getting out of control. Especially considering that state laws protect the physical inviolability of children, one can very easily and quickly lose those household members who are very dear to you and whom you love greatly.

Parents need wisdom from above to determine their authority in the sphere of punishment, as well as understanding of which method of upbringing will be more effective for which violation.

It's desirable, if appropriate, to learn to punish children long before they appear. One can invent different types of disobedience or self-will, then measures of discipline, practice them between spouses and discuss their effectiveness together. Although this will be theory, diverse repetition and premature reflection on this process teaches parents patience, self-control, self-possession, and it will be easy for them to remember and apply in practice what they studied.

It's completely wrong to apply the same punishment for different offenses. If a child breaks toys, lies, screams, doesn't react to remarks, and for this they are always put in a corner, then this can lead their young heart to fear of making mistakes, and they will be lost in guessing what they're doing wrong. And if parents show inconsistency, being guided in punishment by their mood, sometimes punishing and sometimes not paying attention, then this will inevitably lead the little person to rebellion, in which they will demand justice in relation to themselves.

Any punishment should be thought out and done not from a sense of revenge or malice, but from unconditional love for one's child, who is dear to you to such an extent that it will be easier for you to punish them than to indulge them in their misconduct.

Love is a combination of mercy and justice. If one of these qualities is removed from upbringing, then these will be destructive extremes that will cause more evil than good.

If father or mother don't know how best to react to a child's behavior or misdeeds, then one shouldn't take emergency measures based on emotions. But one also shouldn't delay punishment if there was obvious violation.

In each case an individual approach is needed, explanation of guilt, understanding of the child's feelings and their emotional state.

There are various types of disobedience or rule violation. During the period of learning about the surrounding world, one needs to watch more that children don't cause harm to themselves and household property, and it's inappropriate to punish them for something. Although even at a very young age they understand well that there is something that cannot be done. But when intellect awakens in them, and their will can choose their life path and behavior model, then parents should work hard.

There is a proven and demonstrated fact that those parents who engage in raising their offspring from the very swaddling

clothes and wisely, with love, apply all possible types of punishment, subsequently don't need to make much effort in achieving discipline and order. Children who are punished with love and wisdom are under the protection of their home and highly value this parental work. They willingly cooperate with parents in this process.

It also happens that they themselves can invent punishment for themselves and humbly accept and undergo it, understanding that it's deserved and needs to be borne.

Children are very discerning in their unwritten rights. They know what they need and how they should be treated. Children greatly value justice and are sincere in their struggle for their rights and freedom. If parents don't set boundaries for them, then children themselves establish these fences where they are allowed to do so, and they will always test the strength of these boundaries, trying to understand how they can be moved toward parents.

We deal not with little people who understand nothing, but with personalities in whom infinite development potential is laid, and we need to set the right direction for this endless energy of strength and will. And the sooner we understand this and learn to set the course for their development, the easier and more interesting it will be for us to live with these unique people.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Rev. 3:19-20; Heb. 12:6; Prov. 3:11-12; 19:18; Ex. 20:4-7; Deut. 24:16; 1 Chr. 21:9-10; Job 5:17; Ps. 6:1; 118:18; 141:5 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What is punishment?
5. Does the Lord give us examples of His punishment?
6. What would punishment without mercy look like?
7. Will child punishment be effective if it's done in anger or in a burst of evil feelings?
8. In what cases does punishment bring benefit, and in what cases harm?

9. Should punishing parents have self-control and understanding of what needs to be undertaken?
10. Why should punishments be different for different actions?
11. What to do if a child asks for forgiveness during punishment?
12. What types of punishment do you know? And which of them are more effective than others?
13. Should punishment keep a child in fear and deprive them of joy in life?
14. Is it important that children understand they are loved during punishment?

Corporal Punishment

Corporal or physical punishment of a child is a method of influencing their body for educational purposes with causing physical pain and suffering. Unfortunately, such an approach is the most common method of disciplinary influence, since it quickly brings the desired result.

I'll ask a question. You developed a cough that doesn't let you breathe, sleep and live normally. You decided to fight this evil and went to a doctor for advice. He immediately prescribed antibiotics and assured you that they will help after the first dose, but they cause side effects and destroy your immunity.

You decided to gather more information about fighting cough and found those who offer you special herbal teas (for example, Iceland moss) that don't give instant effect, but relieve inflammation, remove the cause of cough and don't cause side effects.

Which way would you prefer to solve your problem?

Corporal punishment is an extreme measure of disciplinary action that should be approached only in special cases, considering the seriousness of the situation and the child's age. This should never be done in a burst of anger or emotions, without prayer and conversation with the guilty party.

We read in Prov. 22:15: "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him." There are many other verses in the Bible about how the rod helps establish discipline. Reading these recommendations, one should understand what a rod is. This is a thin twig that when striking soft body tissues can cause sharp pain at the point of impact, leaving a characteristic trace from contact, but which doesn't cause injury and serious trauma to the body. Pain is an effective means of conveying needed information to consciousness.

I want to clarify that a rod is not a belt, not a stick, not heavy objects and not even a hand, but a thin long twig prepared for punishing a disobedient child.

One should understand children's psychology of perceiving such punishment before applying this in practice. A small child's body is very receptive to any touch and gives the brain corresponding signals about how dangerous or pleasant an object is for contact.

In every child's life comes that moment when they touch very hot objects and get burns. This is very painful and causes prolonged suffering in the body. Through this pain a signal comes to the brain that repeated contact is fraught with similar consequences, and the child bypasses dangerous objects and begins to fear them. And sometimes it's enough to say one word: "Hot," to make it clear that pain will follow, and children with burn experience react very correctly to such warnings.

Something similar happens in the consciousness of a young person when parents, explaining that their behavior was wrong, reinforce their words with brief pain through the rod. This pain teaches that such behavior leads to painful consequences, and next time the child may think about whether it's worth getting into trouble again.

If a son or daughter don't yet know how to speak and express their thoughts aloud, then any corporal punishment is excluded. Children must understand what they're being caused pain for.

Moreover, if a child is already more than five or six years old, then any physical impact on their body can humiliate them and cause deep psychological trauma.

The hand for many parents is the most convenient instrument of punishment that they apply for any reason, not being guided by reason and logic. The hand is a bone that has great weight and large area. To cause significant pain to the body, it's necessary to apply great force for a blow. As a result of such impact, the child may have internal injuries and concussions of tender organs, dislocations and fractures of limbs, and morally it will be difficult for them to perceive your hands as something

good. This can become in their imagination an instrument of torture that they will fear. Slaps, blows to the face, cuffs don't bring the desired result, but are visible manifestation of parental stupidity, cruelty and ignorance, which breaks children's psyche and sows unkind seeds of rebellion.

The best advice for parents: dedicate your hands to God for good and promise to use them only for good deeds and for expressing love and affection.

If we take hospital statistics of all kinds of corporal punishment of children, then the cruelty and torture that parents are capable of is horrifying. And based on this, the state is forced to adopt laws prohibiting any physical punishment for children, including belts and rods. These laws even entail criminal responsibility with deprivation of parental rights.

Once during lunch break, when I was sitting in a car, I witnessed how a mother, walking with her little son, tried to achieve some behavior from her child, and he didn't listen to her. She grabbed him by the clothes and began to shake him. He began screaming and hitting her back. She tried to calm him with slaps, but he resisted even more. Then she took him under her arm and carried the screaming and kicking creature toward home. The scene was quite unpleasant to watch. And if I had filmed this and reported to police, this mother could have had big trouble. The next day they peacefully walked and enjoyed life, but what trauma was on this boy's heart is known only to God.

The Lord is not interested in having our children taken away from us due to our lack of restraint or cruelty. He is ready to give wisdom to those who want to have it and want to raise not spiritual invalids, but worthy people for life in God's Kingdom.

I think many of those reading these lines remember cases from their childhood when parents' rudeness or cruelty caused them incredible mental experiences that still don't leave memory. Although much time has passed, and perhaps parents are no longer alive, that childhood feeling of injustice toward you remains for a long time.

Any just and wise punishment, whatever it may be, doesn't harm the child's health and psyche. If the violator understood their guilt and gave consent to accepting punishment, then even a belt won't traumatize them, but will teach them something.

When love is present in any punishment, then children see and understand this perfectly. And even experiencing sharp pain, they will come for comfort to those who love them, although they punish them. God cooperates with wise parents and influences the minds of rebellious children to comfort them and show another side of life.

The consequence of correct punishment is that after this it's enough for parents to only say that they will now do what they don't really want to, and children immediately react. Memory suggests how "hot the kettle was," and children don't want to experience this again, choosing obedience.

Conversations in calm atmosphere very much help children understand why their parents were forced to punish them one way or another. And if punishment was wise and just, then children agree with such decision, don't harbor resentment and then in their games practice similar methods on their toys.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Job 5:17-18; Prov. 3:11-12; 10:13,24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15-17; Eph. 6:4; Heb. 12:7-11 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What is corporal punishment of a child?
5. In what cases can corporal punishment be used, and when should this not be done?
6. What result does punishment caused by parents' cruelty and anger bring?
7. How does love act in corporal punishment?
8. How should children be forgiven if they ask forgiveness for their actions?
9. What to do if I don't know how to punish a child, but should?

10. How does the Lord punish those He loves? Rev. 3:19.
11. What is the difference between punishment with love and other types?
12. Why is it necessary to punish children?
13. What soul qualities should parents possess when carrying out punishment?
14. Why is special wisdom needed in corporal punishment?

Wisdom in Punishment

There is a saying: "They don't beat you for stealing, but for getting caught." Children who have reached conscious age need to be explained that you require obedience from them not only because you want it that way, but also because God requires this. After all, God Himself punishes the guilty for their crimes, depriving them of His protection or pouring out His judgments on them. The Bible describes enough examples of God's justice and instructions for righteous living.

Children like when they are loved, and they willingly reach toward the Source of love. By explaining to them that God is love, and showing them this love in their life, parents open children's hearts to accepting Divine goodness, which keeps children from evil deeds and leads them to repentance.

If a child, for example, is forbidden to snack between meals, and they are punished for violating this rule, then they may try to perform this action in the absence of parents, saying nothing to them. There is a fact of violating home rules, but there is no punishment for this action, and the young person learns caution, beginning to apply this rule in other spheres of their life as well. Sooner or later the Lord will reveal this violation to their parents, but simply getting away with punishment is not solving the problem. The root of evil lies much deeper.

But when a little person is instructed in spiritual truths and it is conveyed to their consciousness that besides parents there is also an All-seeing God, then they look at their actions completely differently and already defeat temptation to evil within themselves.

The Lord cooperates with wise parents and participates in raising their children. The same power of the Holy Spirit that changes the heart of an adult sinner is capable of writing God's rules in a young heart as well, and these instructions will then guide consciousness throughout life and help the child avoid mistakes and abstain from sin.

Communication with children on the topic of order in the house and in the heart is very important. Children don't need to be proven that God exists. They need to be told this and each time new revelations about Him should be added, reinforcing them with biblical verses. Children are very receptive to any stories, and God strengthens their faith with His Spirit, His revelations and answers to their prayers.

It's important to convey to the child's consciousness the story about the sons of high priest Eli from 1 Sam. 2-4, about what the absence of punishment leads to and the fruit of disobedience, and what heavy consequences arise for everyone in this case. Although the child may be indignant for some time, understanding the power of good that parents put into punishment will help reconsider their behavior.

Trusting relationships between children and parents help parents know everything about their children, and help children tell about everything they do and what happens to them. If children are taught that they won't be scolded and punished for honesty and sincerity, then they will willingly tell about everything they experienced throughout the day, what they did and what new things they learned. Here parents' wisdom is needed not to bring down the "punishing sword" on the head of a sincere little person who with simplicity of heart tells how they decided to wash a dirty cat in the washing machine. No matter how hard it may be for you to listen to such truth, one shouldn't get angry and punish for such revelations, but explanatory conversation must definitely be present in such talk.

If a child's behavior brought material damage or deprived you of something dear, and they sincerely share this with you, then with your regret or grief you can show them that they brought you pain. However, one needs to be very wise not to close the child's heart with your "just" reaction demanding immediate retribution. One thoughtless impulse is enough to teach a child to consider consequences of their honesty and sincerity and forever close their heart to such conversations.

Parents have enough discernment to understand when something is wrong in their child's life. A mother can very quickly identify any violation, so the child doesn't even try to carefully hide something, because they're used to the fact that mom knows everything.

But what to do if a child sincerely tells about rule violations? After all, it's necessary to somehow react to such actions? Conversation in a spirit of love will help find the right solution, and the mother will be able to lead the child to choosing punishment for themselves that won't spoil their life, but will serve as a lesson and help realize that it's more interesting to live in obedience.

If your relationships with children are already destroyed, and they don't trust you or fear your reaction, then this can be corrected by your sincere admission of your inadequacy and promise to improve. Children want to be friends with their parents and are ready to forgive them at any age, but are parents ready for such a step?

Nothing so firmly establishes children in truth as Holy Scripture and examples from the lives of many biblical heroes. God watches over His Word, and when it is placed in a child's heart, it's easy for Him to remind of these truths at the right time and help make the right choice.

Raising children is instruction and upbringing of their parents. Daily cares, endless plans, vanity of earthly life—all this distracts consciousness from the most important people who spin underfoot and sometimes very much interfere with living. But without them your life will no longer bring you joy. Loss of a child for any reason is the greatest tragedy of life for their parents and relatives. And when this person is not nearby, then you so want to do much for them. So do this now, while they are here. While they are small, they can be taught much.

There is no greater and more important profession in the entire Universe than a specialist in character formation in one's child. Any good seed placed in a young heart will bring good fruit throughout life.

In any punishment it's necessary to show your love and concern about the fact that your son or daughter are losing purity. It's important to make it clear that this must definitely be corrected. It's good when there's opportunity to pray together with the violator of order about God's forgiveness for the committed action, and after this carry out punishment, lovingly explaining that this is pleasing to God, and there's no other way.

When a child rebels or is in irritation, then they're unlikely to hear your instructions; rather, they will refuse to perceive you. Postpone conversations to calmer time, but don't respond to their rebellion in the same spirit. Love knows how to find needed words and calm raging emotions.

Parents' self-control helps children see themselves from another side and reconsider their behavior.

But leaving obvious violation without attention and punishment is also impossible. This will bring confusion into the child's understanding, and they will begin to consider that they're punished not from principle, but according to mood, and such opinion will sow unkind seeds in them that will definitely sprout.

By the tone of parents' voice and their behavior when determining punishment, children very well hear and see love or its absence. Words of love that don't contradict biblical principles convince children that their punishment is just and serves them for good, and they humbly accept this.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Rom. 2:3-4; Gal. 5:22-23; Heb. 12:6-13; Isa. 53:5; Prov. 22:6; 23:13; Eph. 4:28-32; 5:1; 6:1-4; Matt. 7:12; James 1:4-7; Job 10:14 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. How is wisdom manifested in punishing children?
5. Do children understand the spirit of punishment coming from their parents?

6. How does God give wisdom in raising children when asked for this?
7. How can Biblical truths influence a child's mind?
8. Why is it so important to base a child's obedience not only on parents' commands, but also on God's Word?
9. Do you think the Lord exerts His influence on children of those parents who walk in truth and desire the same for their children?
10. Is it important to teach children fear of God and obedience to God's law?
11. Why did Jesus teach that we should not hinder children from coming to Him? Matt. 19:14.
12. Do you think if children are constantly taught obedience with wisdom, will they learn something?
13. Are there instructions in the Bible about how to properly raise children?
14. Should everything work out for parents the first time?
Should one give up if obedience lessons are learned slowly?

Just Punishment

When sending children to study at any school, we understand that they will be taught something there, and they will come out as educated people. Any educational institution forms certain discipline in the student's heart, and it would be surprising for us if schools graduated their students with the same level of knowledge and qualifications with which they accepted applicants.

Family is the very first school of life for a child, which they enter against their will, but by fact of birth. They have no choice, but there is an unwritten program by which knowledge of this world occurs and study of everything this world is filled with.

Training obedience is also a school of life and that science which not many children like, but which they must definitely understand and absorb through pain and deprivation, through trials and humility.

When we see obedient and meek children in other families who are very attentive and prudent, then an impression may be formed that their parents were lucky, and this is a happy accident that doesn't happen to everyone. But if we inquire how much parental strength and patience was invested to raise such a miracle having self-control and right direction in life, then we will understand that without certain efforts nothing similar will grow in your garden, but only weeds and thorns will grow.

In my childhood I was friends with many classmates and was always interested in how their parents punished them. Many of them were never punished by parents and parents didn't react to their violations of school discipline in any way, which caused envy in me.

Being teenagers, these friends created many problems for their entire surroundings. But one of my friends drowned while drunk at 16 years old. Another shortly after got into a fight while drunk and was killed. The rest died before 30, some from alcohol, some from drugs, and someone spent their life in

prisons, and it's unknown if they're still alive. It's painful to realize this, but now I see direct connection between training obedience and future human happiness. And the Bible confirms such conclusions with its statements. We read in Heb. 12:6-11: "For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."

In any punishment there must also be justice, which children understand, see and feel very well. Parents don't need to play theater, but must have knowledge and self-control. Children can provoke punishments themselves, consciously violate all prohibitions and drive even restrained parents out of themselves to test boundary strength or because their mind at this time is subjected to attacks from evil spirits. It's better for father and mother to abstain from any form of punishment than to perform it under influence of emotions or over a rebelling child who is incapable of adequately perceiving and evaluating anything. If your heart is boiling with anger and your eyes are darkening from indignation, then set your heart not to do anything until you soberly evaluate the situation. Postponement of punishment is also part of the upbringing process, and this won't undermine your authority in the guilty party's eyes.

It happens that the most difficult action for parents is showing calmness and self-control to soberly evaluate the situation and act wisely.

If your child has pressed their lips together, clenched their hands and is tense like a compressed spring, then one shouldn't

expect good results from such a state. They are ready for any battle, and no punishment of yours will make them see reason, but rather will embitter them more and sow unkind seeds. But such reaction to what's happening has temporary character, and sometime the riot will pass, and then it will be possible to convey to the consciousness of the little rebel that such spirit is unacceptable in your house and must be punished. Children understand well the justice of such attitude and accept what they deserved, but they will never justify any unjust attitude toward themselves and may keep this pain for many years, especially if this was systematic attitude.

In any punishment there must be certain rules that children intuitively know, and parents must understand these rules and support them.

1. Boundaries, prohibitions and norms that cannot be violated must be defined. If they don't exist, then it's difficult for children to understand what they're being punished for.
2. Don't require impossible things from children that they can't yet do or don't understand.
3. Don't perform punishment under influence of anger or irritation.
4. React immediately to any violation that is discovered. Let the violator understand that their actions are discovered and establish measure of punishment according to situation.
5. Before implementing punishment, let the guilty party understand that you very much regret that you have to act this way, but leaving them without punishment is also impossible.
6. After punishment, definitely comfort the guilty party, hug them, assure them of your love and wish them not to repeat such mistakes.
7. When the child calms down and returns to normal, discuss with them in light of the Bible why disobedience must be punished and what heavy consequences it can lead to if it remains without punishment.
8. Perform any punishment with love for the violator, explaining to them that they are punished from love. It's

precisely the spirit of punishment that determines its benefit or harm.

9. When possible and necessary, pray before applying punishment and after it.
10. Never reproachfully remind the child of past mistakes for which they asked forgiveness.
11. Always forgive the violator when they repentantly ask forgiveness, and behave as if nothing happened.
12. Determine type of punishment according to age and violation.
13. When passing sentence, don't cause injury to the child's body and psyche.
14. Always remember that parents' authority is created very slowly, but can be destroyed by their own hands and words very quickly, without possibility of restoration.
15. When possible, allow the child to choose punishment for themselves for conscious violation and control its implementation.

All these and similar rules are good only when they are written in mind and heart. If they are placed in a frame and hung in a visible place without trying to absorb what's written, then they will testify against you.

Remember the fact that children understand and feel very well when they bear just punishment and when this is done in a burst of anger or arbitrariness. They subconsciously evaluate the situation better than parents and will accept everything from love for them, but won't forget what had another spirit.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Rev. 3:19; Prov. 3:11-12; 10:9; 15:10; 19:18-20; 29:17; James 2:13; Isa. 49:15; Luke 12:47-48; Rom. 13:5; 2 Cor. 2:6-8; Joel 3:13 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What is just punishment?
5. How to determine if my punishment was just?
6. Should one remember that children understand very well which punishment is just and which is not?

7. Why shouldn't children be punished for sincerity and truthfulness?
8. Should punishment, besides justice, also be wise?
9. What goal should any child punishment have?
10. Is the spirit with which just punishment is carried out important?
11. Do parents need to learn how to correctly, with love and justly punish all disobedience?
12. Why is it necessary to convey to a disobedient child that by their disobedience they sin against God?
13. What to do if it's necessary to punish the guilty party, but you really don't want to?
14. Why should there be different punishments for different violations?

Types of Punishment

When you begin to speak to parents about the importance of punishment, about the wisdom and justice of this activity, then you hope that they develop understanding of responsibility before God and children, but it's also necessary to convey to consciousness that punishment is not only the rod or corner, but also many other methods that help the child realize direct connection between disobedience and natural consequences of such behavior.

For the very first offense of disobedience, the boy and girl were punished by being forbidden to eat fruits from the Tree of Life and allowed to see with their own eyes what sin leads to and how it subsequently affects descendants.

God did not beat our forefathers. He simply limited their access to the place where they were happy. But at the same time the Lord assured them of His love and gave them hope for salvation and their return to their Homeland.

Punishment should correspond to the type of violation, be a natural cause, convey to the violator's consciousness information about the harm of disobedience, correspond to age, temperament, receptivity and character of the child. Parents need to know whether the wrong action was committed due to lack of understanding or attention, or from evil intent and stubbornness.

When a son scattered toys and doesn't want to collect them, continuing to do his business and not reacting to all mother's requests, then putting him in a corner for this is inappropriate, spanking him is cruel, not reacting is dangerous. But you can let him understand that if you do this for him, then toys will be put away in another room, and he won't be able to play with them. And if this doesn't help, then you can put away all scattered toys and not give them to him until he understands why he was deprived of this joy.

If a child refuses to wash dishes, then at the next meal you can give him his dirty plate and spoon and praise the cleanliness of your utensils.

If a daughter doesn't hurry to dress for a walk, then you can leave her without this type of rest and let her understand that she was late for this event.

If a child scratches, then you can put socks on their hands and let them walk like that.

It's desirable that punishment be a consequential cause of disobedience and concern that part of the body that participated in the violation. This can be done in the form of a game and allow the child to choose the measure of restraint for the disobedient part of the body themselves.

When a daughter doesn't want to make her bed but wants to play with dolls, then you can separate her from yourself by name and scold the disobedient girl together and together assign punishment to her. This sounds approximately like this: "Daughter, imagine what a disobedient Lenchka we have today. She doesn't want to clean up her bed. What do you think, should we punish such a mischief-maker? Let's do something so she understands that she needs to be an obedient girl." This is not a rule for all cases, but an opportunity to help the violator look at their behavior from the side.

If a child periodically is late for the beginning of meals, then if they miss this event a couple of times, they won't die from hunger.

What should under no circumstances and under no conditions be done is to inflict injuries on the child's body, cripple their psyche by locking them in a dark toilet or closet, frighten them with terrible punishment or death, promise to give them to other people or throw them on the street, torture them with hunger and cold. Such things teach nothing, but only destroy the psyche and health of a young creature.

Also good for upbringing are natural consequences of disobedience. When a mother says that a hot iron or kettle

cannot be touched, and the child still reaches for these objects, then sometime it's necessary to let them become convinced how painful it is to show stubbornness and not listen to warnings.

If a child cannot be friends with other children and brings discord to relationships, then you can forbid joint games and leave them alone in their room.

Prohibitions and punishments should never extend to spiritual values. The violator should always remember and understand that God loves them, and they can turn to the Lord in prayer and for help in any situation, at any time and under any circumstances. But parents' prayers should also sound according to events happening in the family.

You cannot frighten children with a punishing God for the sake of achieving order. They should understand that our Heavenly Father is merciful and just.

We parents, with our hands, words and attitude, create in children's imagination an image of such God as we ourselves are. Children are inclined to compare everyone with us, and while they are small, it's difficult for them to separate earthly father from Heavenly.

If a child sincerely asks forgiveness, realizing their misdeeds, then it's worth postponing or reconsidering the passed sentence. Punishment is not a goal, but a means to bring the child's soul to the needed goal.

When husband is not home, and children behave disgracefully, then mother needs to act in time and not make father a gendarme who will come and punish violators. Father may evaluate the situation differently, and children should rejoice at his arrival, not shrink from horror of inevitable retribution for their mistakes.

Children are inclined to break and spoil good things. Their plans don't include desire to ruin their parents and put them on the street, so it's important to understand that greater damage will be caused by your spontaneous reaction that traumatizes

psyche, not loss of property on acquiring which much time and effort was spent.

It's also good to foresee violations and determine punishment in advance, informing children about this. Then punishment will be deserved, and no one will dispute it.

Explanatory conversations are also an effective form of punishment. They may not carry physical impact, but convey important information to consciousness about existing order and sad consequences.

Praise can also be an effective method of stopping disobedience. For example: "Sashenka, you're a future professor. How can you allow yourself to scatter toys around the house? I know you as a neat boy!"

When I praise discipline and obedience in the presence of children, I thereby let them understand the importance and advantage of precisely this lifestyle, and then it will be easy for them to make a choice in favor of dad, to contribute their share to family happiness.

Also after applying punishment it's necessary to instill in the child's heart hope that this misdeed possibly won't be repeated, and that you believe that the child will definitely succeed.

Before children learn self-control, long years of struggle with their disobedience and your own lack of restraint will pass. But Eternal life is worth getting into and living in it together with your children, so one shouldn't give up and let everything go. We have invisible helpers who work together with us for salvation of our families and rejoice in all our victories and achievements in the struggle for obedience. Success always accompanies those who boldly go forward following Christ and seek wisdom for all their work. And the earlier training obedience begins, the more effectively it will be implemented in children's lives.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Prov. 17:10; Gen. 3:16-24; Ex. 21:23-25; Deut. 5:8-11; 2 Sam. 24:12; Job 5:17; Ps. 39:11; 141:5; Prov. 13:24; Heb. 12:6-13 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. Why is it undesirable to punish a child the same way for different violations?
5. Should severity of punishment correspond to severity of violation?
6. What types of punishment do you know as effective?
7. Do parents need wisdom from above for quick choice of correct punishment?
8. Why cannot children be punished with spiritual things? For example: forbidding them to pray or forbidding them to attend church meetings?
9. Should one practice the same punishment if it's not effective?
10. If children are taught obedience, is it necessary to create extreme conditions for them to test their obedience?
11. Why, when choosing punishment, is it necessary to consider age, severity of offense, child's receptivity, their awareness and understanding of what happened?
12. What to do if your things are spoiled, and the baby joyfully tells you how beautifully they fall and break?
13. Should rules and laws be established first, before punishments are imposed?
14. Should one consider the fact that the state doesn't punish children for their crimes until a certain age established by law? Why is this accepted and who is responsible for their violations?

Carrot and Stick

A stick is a thin rod that, when in sharp contact with the body, causes severe pain at the point of contact. It is an effective means of achieving desired discipline, helps quickly absorb complex rules and solves many problems without unnecessary nerves and worries.

A carrot is a sweet flour product that causes pleasant sensations in the mouth at the point of contact with the tongue. It is an effective means in achieving desired discipline, helps quickly solve complex problems and doesn't require excessive nervous tension from parents.

There is the following saying: To stimulate a child to something, you need a stick or a carrot. There are positive sides to one approach or another, but there is also harm that will cause irreparable damage to the child's psyche if one gets carried away with certain methods of influence.

Under "stick" one can understand physical impact on the body, emotional indignation—reprimands, screaming and scolding. Territorial punishment is deprivation of some special privileges or rights to games and leisure.

"Carrot" can be praise, hugs, kind words, giving some sweets or small gifts. In some cases this can be monetary reward. This also implies providing greater privileges or permission for longer time for games or walks.

Although "stick" very clearly conveys information about behavioral rules and helps quickly achieve the desired result, it also brings pain to the child's body and psyche. And pain doesn't develop responsive feelings of love, kindness and tenderness in consciousness. It causes fear, resentment, annoyance, aggression, withdrawal, weakens emotional connection with parents, lowers self-esteem, can stimulate the child to secrecy or deception to avoid punishment. "Stick" is not an effective and long-term means of influence for achieving the desired goal.

Although "carrot" is pleasant to every child, excessive stimulation with this means can form in the young person's mind too strong dependence on constant encouragement, which will stimulate them to fulfill direct duties not from love for parents, but from desire to receive another "carrot."

Encouragement is just as important a part of the educational process and requires the same wisdom from above as punishment. If you simply take this method and make it the main stimulus for achieving the desired result in behavior and discipline, then this can cause irreparable harm to personality formation.

There are certain family responsibilities that children should do from personal necessity or from love, or because this contributes to general family welfare. And this is a norm of life that doesn't require additional praise. For example, cleaning one's room and bed, washing dishes, doing homework.

If these activities are additionally stimulated, then there is risk that children will begin to do this for the sake of receiving another encouragement and will lose living interest in these activities when the stimulus stops.

Absence of encouragement is as bad as its excess. A kind word, gentle touch, deserved praise, some surprise are appropriate when the child doesn't expect this, but performs their tasks wholeheartedly.

It's also very important to encourage the child not for the result, but for their efforts and striving toward the final goal.

If you praise children only for successful completion of some work, then this can distort their understanding of responsibility and cause annoyance if the result is not as good as expected.

Children don't have that sense of responsibility that adults sometimes expect, and non-completion of some assignment doesn't mean that children ignore it. They may simply have dozens of other urgent matters that they also want to manage to do, but this doesn't go so quickly.

If encouragements are too frequent and inappropriate, then the child may stop valuing them or will consider them insufficient.

One should also understand the child's love language. What for one may be the limit of dreams and highest reward, in another may not evoke any joy. Children, like adults, have special perception of offered encouragements. If their love language is touch, and they greatly rejoice in your hugs, then other stimulators won't influence their heart as much as the warmth of your hands and body.

If "stick" is an external factor of behavior control, then "carrot" develops internal motivation and makes any duty desirable and significant.

Family responsibilities should be fulfilled by children not from fear of punishment and not from desire to receive encouragement, but from correct understanding of their family status, in which everyone works for the good of others from love and desire to bring benefit and contribute to the common cause.

There are things that children shouldn't do either by age or by status, but through "carrot" they can gradually be taught to perform those types of work to which they wouldn't even pay attention. Encouragement helps the young master feel their significance, and sometimes indispensability. Awareness that you are needed by someone, dear and useful, stimulates the heart to achieve higher goals.

In spiritual values and matters related to salvation of the soul, parents need to show special wisdom and caution so as not to create a distorted idea about God in the child's consciousness with the help of "stick or carrot" and not buy their obedience if children have no interest.

Not all children perceive biblical themes equally. One listens with interest to the same story about David and Goliath for the 121st time, while another doesn't understand why it was necessary to act so cruelly with one who wanted to test strength.

In many cases, timely and wise "carrots" can form correct habits, love for work, perseverance and many other positive qualities of soul that in the absence of encouragement might simply not develop at all. Receiving reward for this or that work, the young worker begins to see benefit from their occupation, develop correct internal motivation and receive true satisfaction from work done. Moreover, both the process itself and the result bring benefit.

If a child's work is properly valued, then this raises their self-esteem. Positive emotions contribute to stable development and reinforcement of business qualities and form emotional stability and self-confidence. They're not afraid to take on new tasks and solve them. They're used to getting pleasure from what they do.

It should be noted that in correct encouragement, Higher Forces of Deity are also present, which establish the soul in truth and in the right direction of life.

"Dry bread" is also one of the varieties of human relationships in which there is no taste of life and joy, but there is sense of duty, responsibility, necessity, because that's how it should be. They don't let one die of hunger, but also don't satisfy the child's soul with what it needs. Children quickly get used to what they're fed and bring that seed that is sown in them. But think for yourself what you're cultivating in your child, and how you want to see them in the future?

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Phil. 4:8; Gen. 3:23; 15:1; Ruth 2:12; Prov. 11:18; Matt. 25:23; Luke 6:26; 19:17; John 18:22-23; Gal. 5:13-15; 1 Tim. 3:1-5; Titus 3:1-8 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. To what sphere of our lesson do Jacob's words from Gen. 27:4 relate: "and make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die."
5. What is "carrot"? How do you understand this?
6. In what cases does "carrot" bring benefit and blessing?

7. In what cases can "carrot" become a curse for the child?
8. In what cases should children be encouraged and promised reward for their deeds, and in what cases is this unacceptable?
9. What love languages in children do you know?
10. Why is it so important to know your child's love language and encourage them precisely in this language?
11. Why won't encouragement in an unfamiliar love language bring expected effect and benefit?
12. What types of "carrot" do you know?
13. Is it pleasant for you yourself to hear and receive approval and encouragement addressed to you?
14. Does the expression "smarty" make you happy? In what cases is it inappropriate?

Importance of Sleep and Its Benefits

What does a child do immediately after birth? They are indignant about having to leave a warm place, blink their eyes trying to understand where they ended up, and then fall asleep. Sleep is an integral part of every person's life. We spend a third of our life sleeping. Our entire life is arranged so that at the end of the day a person should go to bed until morning. And so every day until death. And then a brief moment and glorious awakening for Eternal life.

Sleep is a natural transition of the body's vital activity from wakefulness to rest, reboot and recovery, during which consciousness is disconnected, nervous system activity decreases and the body begins to launch restorative processes for regulation of vital functions.

Sleep is an important factor for strengthening immunity, cell regeneration, metabolism restoration, production of growth hormones, joy, appetite and restoration of physical and emotional strength.

A newborn child can sleep 17 hours a day, waking up for feeding, but the older they become, the more their sleep time decreases. An adult's sleep time is 7-8 hours. This circadian rhythm is embedded in our body by the Creator Himself, and if something in it is artificially constantly violated, then doors open for all kinds of diseases and mental disorders.

It's important for parents to understand how much and when their small and big children should sleep and strictly follow this daily routine so that the child's body can develop properly. Child sleep deprivation is a gross violation of health laws and can lead to many negative consequences affecting physical, spiritual, emotional and mental human development.

Children grow in sleep, during which there is release of somatotropin hormone responsible for normal development of muscles and bones. With sleep deprivation, disruption in this process can occur and body growth slows down.

In the early stage of sleep, with sufficient darkness, the pineal gland produces melatonin hormone, which has antioxidant properties, slows cell aging, increases immunity, regulates circadian rhythms in the body.

Lack of sleep can also affect increase of stress hormone—cortisol, which doesn't decrease during rest hours but remains at high level, which can lead to insomnia, further aggravating health problems.

It's not difficult for parents to notice that when a child needs sleep, they become disobedient, capricious, begin to whine and cry for no reason. The body gives signals about need for rest, and the child, not understanding what's happening to them, begins to behave badly. It's important to notice this timely and give opportunity for the child's body to sleep. Daytime sleep should last as long as needed until the baby wakes up on their own. It happens that after daytime rest the child's body is already awake, but they themselves haven't come to themselves yet and look very gloomy, and need gentle parental embrace to finally wake up.

Strange as it may seem, children who sleep little become very mobile and hyperactive and very poorly and reluctantly go to sleep. Although some parents might like this, one needs to sound the alarm, as there is disruption of frontal lobe function, the child's nervous system is excessively overloaded, impulse control decreases and malfunction can occur.

A couple of hours before sleep, one needs to watch that children are calm, don't eat stimulating food, don't watch exciting films and don't have access to gadgets. Joint reading of useful books, calm conversations and prayers before sleep prepare the child's body for sleep and naturally introduce it into this state of rest.

Caring for their children's rest, parents shouldn't forget about themselves, that they too are living people who need night rest. Night communication, late film watching and sitting on the internet until late doesn't add health, but destroys what is then very difficult to find or restore in the body.

When a person goes to bed not too late and spends enough time sleeping, then their circadian rhythms are restored and all hormones excellently perform their functions, and upon awakening consciousness is filled with hormones of joy and happiness, and life energy overflows.

That communication, film and show watching, game participation that is customary to conduct at night time is not worth a gram of your health, which once lost, you can never get anywhere. And if parents have enough wisdom and strength to force their children to live correctly and receive blessing from this, then where does all this go when it comes to themselves?

Exceptions can be in every person's life. And one-time sleep deprivation, although it brings discomfort, the body quickly recovers and serves faithfully further.

From my many years of observing people who constantly worked night shifts, I can tell that they all subsequently had serious problems with normal sleep and little brought them joy in life when health was lost.

Sleep is also God's gift to humans, during which everyone stops sinning and takes a pause in their life path. And night lifestyle deprives the already exhausted by sin body of those important restorative processes that want to serve us and heal us.

With sleep deprivation, memory worsens, learning ability decreases, stress resistance decreases, coordination worsens, chronic fatigue becomes the norm of life. Accordingly: study, behavior and life activity of the child are not at the proper level, which parents may perceive as disobedience or rebellion against their influence and aggravate this with unfair reprimands and punishment.

It's good when children have a separate room for sleep where no one will disturb them. If this doesn't exist, then parents need to adapt to the child's rest routine and not interfere with their noise and loud communication. The child's rest room should be dark and quiet. All electronic and radiating devices should be turned off.

Late food intake, shortly before sleep, is also not a desired rule. A full stomach doesn't give the body sufficient rest. And sweet or flour food increases sugar release into blood, which prevents the body from producing melatonin. And hard-to-digest food creates unnecessary load on digestive organs and the body begins to produce cortisol prematurely, leading to wakefulness. During food digestion, growth hormone is not released, leading to developmental delay.

We should all remember that at night time, when we sleep, although our mind rests, the body continues to live and perform necessary processes embedded in it by God. Therefore one needs to watch this and cooperate with one's health.

Ignorance of health laws or ignorance in these matters doesn't protect us and our children from consequences of their violations. Although we're all different, health laws are the same for everyone. Obedience to these rules brings health blessing, enriches life and brings joy.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read 1 Cor. 6:19-20; Ps. 3:5; 4:8; 127:2; Prov. 3:24; Eccl. 5:12; Jer. 31:26; Mark 4:38; 6:31 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What is sleep?
5. Why is it important to know what processes occur in the body during sleep?
6. How is sleep deprivation connected to a person's spiritual state?
7. What hormones are produced during sleep, what are they called and what is their role?
8. Why do children need to sleep longer than adults?
9. What consequences can chronic sleep deprivation have in a child?
10. Why is it important for a child to have an established daily routine and bedtime?
11. How does spiritual state affect sleep quality?
12. How does sleep quality affect spiritual state?

13. How can prayer before sleep help a child and adult?
14. How can parents set an example for children of correct attitude toward rest?

Training Patience

Patience is a child's ability to wait for what is promised or due without crying, irritation, aggression or anxiety. This is the ability to control one's feelings and emotions, being distracted by other things and tasks when there is no immediate answer. This is the ability to endure pain or humiliation without unnecessary noise and indignation. Patience is one of the important qualities of Christian character that parents need to develop and root in their children.

Our entire life consists of constant waiting for someone or something, and our children experience the same. They will definitely encounter the necessity to wait for something or endure something in their life.

Training patience begins long before the child's birth. Father and mother should themselves possess this quality of soul and not hurry each other unnecessarily, showing understanding and condescension to one another. When adults are taught patient attitude, then it's quite easy for them to instill similar spirit in their offspring as well.

Like development of other positive character traits, training patience requires special parental wisdom, persistence and long-suffering. The fruit of this labor won't be visible immediately. And any fruit requires much time before it ripens and becomes suitable for consumption.

A child is not born with understanding of our society's laws, and they are inclined to remind the surrounding world of their rights through crying, demanding due nutrition or dry clothes. And the very first lessons of patience they take from the calmness and tenderness of their mother, who with gentle voice explains to them that everything is good, she is nearby, and they will receive what's expected. But one should also know that children's sense of time differs from adult understanding, and what for parents is not long, for a little person may seem like eternity.

If a child knows their feeding hours, then an impulse for mandatory food intake triggers in their mind, and mother shouldn't delay this event, but also shouldn't instantly fulfill all whims of the young creature. Through calm speech of their parents, an infant receives information that everything is good and learns to wait for what they will definitely receive. With the baby's growth, the interval between meals and sleep time also grows.

Training patience implies instilling in children voluntary waiting in joyful spirit. One way or another, they will have to learn to wait for something and endure something, but with what mood they will do this depends on how parents teach them this.

Love in parents' relationships, tenderness in conversation with each other, their courtesy and respect are understandable even to tiny children, and this spirit spreads to small family members as well, letting them understand that they are safe and that they too are loved and valued.

A baby's daily routine doesn't differ in great variety of events, and therefore infants quickly get used to what happens to them in life and learn to wait for their turn or that time when they will be attended to and given proper attention and care.

A child feels mother's mood and very quickly absorbs lessons of praise and approval for shown patience, as well as her displeasure and irritation for wrong behavior, so the baby involuntarily adapts to maternal mood.

Children don't orient themselves in time, but living in their father's house, they learn that not everything is achieved immediately and in any matter, that events are a process that cannot be accelerated and can be slowed down under certain circumstances. It's important to concentrate children's attention not on achieving the final goal or result, but on the process itself.

For example, seed growth very clearly shows all stages of development from the moment of planting it in the ground to bringing fruit. Observing this event, the child learns that there

are things that must naturally develop, and no haste or intolerance will accelerate the process of growth and fruit bearing.

Similar examples can be demonstrated in food preparation, in building something, in drawing and in many games.

Examples from animal life, from any creativity and stories about how big things and achievements come from small deeds for a long time teach children that every matter has its process and its time.

It's good to invent such activities where children will see on personal example the prolonged process of their creativity and understand how much patience needs to be invested in any matter before result is achieved.

When a child grasps the meaning of gradual transition from one stage of creative process to another through personal experience, then the law "first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head" is imprinted in their consciousness. Mark 4:28.

The Bible contains many examples of patience manifestation and instructions about how this patience develops and how important this trait of true Christian character is, which God wants to see in every person, and also in children.

During illness or receiving injuries, children encounter internal sufferings that often have prolonged character and don't pass by their desire. In such moments, kind words and parental care teach children to steadfastly endure inevitable trials that don't disappear by themselves, but are substantially eased by parental tenderness and attention. Words of comfort and calls to patience teach hope that soon everything will pass and healing will come, which children willingly believe and at the slightest improvement of their condition immediately transition to active phase of their pastime.

When a child's mind awakens and transitions to active phase of communication with other people, they begin to analyze what's happening, and children need to be given instructions about the

importance of patience formation, explaining that calmness and joyful waiting are desired behavior that adorns any person.

Parents themselves are direct confirmation of all their instructions. It's not difficult for them to instill in children qualities that they themselves manifest in life and teach children what they know how to do and control.

If dad, while waiting for the family to go for a walk, quietly grumbles and shows displeasure due to delay of someone from household members, then what does he teach his children? That impatience should be demonstrated in such a way. Children involuntarily copy their parents' behavior and are established in what they see at home.

Father's polite attitude toward mother and wife's respect for husband is transmitted to their offspring as well. It won't be difficult for children to manifest similar spirit because they have a clear example in their parents' life. Negative example also has its influence and also teaches children something.

Teaching patience is quite a long process that forms appropriate habits in growing person's life not in one day. There will be mistakes in upbringing, there will be breakdowns, negative influence will be exerted from outside, but if the course is chosen correctly, then the final goal will definitely be achieved.

The Lord works together with God-fearing parents, teaches patience and writes in children's minds those lessons that will keep the person from many evils throughout all subsequent life.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Luke 8:15; 21:19; James 1:2-4; 2 Pet. 1:3-8; Rev. 14:12; Eph. 4:2-3; Rom. 5:3-5; 8:25; Gal. 5:22-23 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What is patience?
5. What types of patience do you know?
6. Why is it necessary to develop patience in children?

7. Should one have patience oneself before teaching someone else this?
8. Is there anything in common between the patience spoken of in the Bible and what a child should have?
9. How to determine a child's level of patience?
10. What methods for developing patience do you know?
11. What games can teach a child patience?
12. Why should patience be joyful and voluntary?
13. What to do if my child is irritable and impatient?
14. What to do if your patience has run out and you're afraid and can't vouch for yourself?

Training Long-suffering

When patience ends, then long-suffering comes into force.

Long-suffering is the fruit of the Holy Spirit and one of the important character qualities of a person who is called to holy life already on this earth. Interesting events and trials await us, and our human potential won't be enough to endure what we will encounter in the near future.

Training long-suffering in children, I, first of all, give myself to God for upbringing so that He gives me His grace and teaches me to endure everything.

Family education is also a battlefield where I constantly encounter the wild and strong will of a child, and my task is not to break this will, but to direct it in the right direction and instill useful skills in it. I am not an enemy to my child, but a mentor who has authority from God in forming Christian character in a wild little person.

Children are not born with understanding of virtue, but they are open for learning and establishing in the heart those skills that will be placed in their mind.

The first child in a family is the most important person who will have the greatest influence on all subsequent children. And skills of patience and other virtues instilled in them from childhood will spread to all their younger brothers and sisters.

Training patience is the most long-term project of constant learning that has success not so much from brief instructions as from the general direction of father and mother's life.

Children very often are initiators and provocateurs of bad behavior that can drive anyone out of themselves. And it's very important in these minutes not to break the child's spirit, but showing calmness, take wise measures to exit the situation with minimal trauma to the child's soul.

For example, when a baby spits porridge in your face and then deliberately overturns a plate with this same porridge on you,

then you need strength from above to very quickly understand what happened, and that clothes and face can be washed, and the little rebel needs to be told that acting this way is indecent, and any society doesn't accept such behavior. Calm reaction of father or mother has greater influence in such cases than spanking and screaming.

Many activities of useful work and developing games help the child absorb lessons of patience, where they experience long-term process of advancement toward goal or victory. And wise parental instructions, words of praise, encouragement and approval help young mind absorb lessons of patience and effort and later choose precisely this path.

There are many games in which there are winners and losers. My wife and I tried to find games for children that don't develop spirit of competition and joy that you're first and better than others, but those in which each participant received pleasure from the game process itself, and victory was common.

If it was a football game, then all participants congratulated winners, and winners put losers on their backs and made a victory lap with them. And it was interesting to observe what joy the losers experienced, sitting astride the winners.

Planting and caring for flowers and plants teaches children how much time and care each sprout needs before it reaches beauty or gives abundant fruit. And timely comments and parental instructions teach children patience in waiting for what will overtake them in the future.

Children believe adults, and their faith is rewarded by receiving long-awaited promised result or gift.

Patience is not only correct and calm reaction, but also polite waiting for one's turn. Politeness is manifested in courteous words of respect, apology and gratitude, in sincere joy of life and in honoring others above oneself. It's important to explain to children what reaction politeness evokes in other people, and what attitude is formed in cultural communication with others during waiting.

Children's logic and spontaneity always evokes tenderness and interest in adults, so one shouldn't forbid the child to share their conclusions with older people.

During nature walks or when doing homework, one can slow down the pace and teach the child to get pleasure and enjoyment from the process of these activities.

It's important to teach the child to voice their emotions and experiences. Then they can better understand what's happening to them, how to identify negativity and how to resist evil. And it will be easier for parents to understand the child's state.

Sports activities also form certain skills in patience, where children see first with eyes of faith, then with their own eyes certain result of their persistent training.

Voicing expectation helps the young person patiently wait for that hour when they will receive desired, and this makes them capable of dealing with impulses of impatience to quickly get what they want.

It's important to explain the difference between "want" and "need." The child needs to distinguish their desires from natural needs and learn to behave correctly in one case or another.

Practice of "silence lessons" or playing silence teaches children to concentrate on silence and find quiet activities for themselves, showing patience toward noisy games.

Any waiting is tiresome for children, but it can be made into a game and switch the child's mind to what they see around, teaching that in waiting much free time appears that can be used meaningfully.

Reading useful books accustoms the mind to patient analysis of what's read, and practical activities reinforce theory in practice.

Modern gadgets and computer games destroy many spiritual values and very quickly deliver pleasure to the brain, bypassing thought processes. Essentially, they form the opposite of tolerance and cripple children's consciousness, training consumer skills in them. Parents need to keep young minds

away from such temptations and give children what is useful for body and soul.

Joint reading and studying the Bible with children is the most powerful and natural source of patience formation, not only for children but also for parents. God's Word contains many useful examples, instructions and lessons of tolerance. These words, entering the mind, are fixed in it by the power of the Holy Spirit and later, at the right time, remind of God's principles, helping in making wise decisions. Behind these truths stands God's power and wisdom, which form the righteous person's way of thinking.

And the very time spent reading spiritual things is a stop from worldly vanity for knowing eternal truths. Sometimes one has to force oneself to postpone all other matters and plans and patiently explain to young mind what one wouldn't mind learning to understand oneself.

From reading God's Word comes faith that patiently awaits the promised and rewards the soul with achieving the expected.

Many of God's promises are fulfilled in long-term perspective, and children need to be taught this. Then they will be able to patiently await the promised and believe that God will definitely do what He promised. And in this waiting, parents need to demonstrate reliability in their own promises with their personal example, rewarding their children's patient waiting with this.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Prov. 16:32; 1 Cor. 13:4-8; Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 4:2-3; 1 Thess. 5:14; Heb. 6:11-15; 2 Tim. 4:2; Ex. 34:6-7; Ps. 86:15; James 5:7-8 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What is long-suffering?
5. How quickly do your children grow? Should their development be hurried?
6. What examples of biblical long-suffering do you know that can be given as examples to children?

7. Why is it so important to base all instructions on biblical principles?
8. Will God help parents form long-suffering in their children if they ask Him for this?
9. Why aren't children born with spiritual knowledge and principles, but need to be taught this?
10. Do you think patient children will be happier than those who have no patience?
11. How to learn patience oneself if there's very little of it?
12. How to determine that God is long-suffering? And how to apply this character quality to oneself?
13. Why is it better to train long-suffering in children through biblical examples than with simple words?
14. What other soul skills need to be instilled in children?

Training Perseverance

How often have you started doing something and then switched to something else or gotten tired of routine tasks and put them in the "long drawer"? Any work is good when it's brought to completion and brings benefit. But it happens that the very process of performing some tasks brings pleasure and satisfaction from participating in it.

Small children are not taught perseverance, and it can be very difficult for them to concentrate on performing one task. They can easily leave it and begin doing something else, then the next thing, and so on.

Abundance of games and toys doesn't teach the baby concentration on one thing, and when the internal energy source works at full capacity, then they are capable of tirelessly taking on everything, helping everyone, participating in everything, and they will still have enough strength to engage in new activities and perform them wholeheartedly.

But such pastime with everything at once without any result can form frivolous attitude toward work in the child's consciousness, and later it will be very difficult for them to concentrate on one task and bring it to completion.

One should consider the child's age before loading them with long-term games or long stories. It's necessary to give the baby what they are able to absorb and do, and then encourage them for attentiveness and perseverance.

Concentration and attentiveness are not formed in one go. This is quite a prolonged process in which parents must understand some rules of their behavior and not violate them.

The most important rule that father and mother should take to heart is: 1) not to distract their child from any activity they are involved in unnecessarily, if it doesn't cause damage to household property and is safe for life and health of both the child and everyone around.

1. Watch that the child's activity develops their creative abilities and doesn't make them dependent on some things and games.
2. That children's activities don't contradict biblical principles, don't teach the child evil, don't evoke spirit of competition and don't form pride.
3. Mental activities should alternate with physical activity.
4. With successful completion of any assigned activities, it's necessary to increase time and load for accomplishing next tasks with age.
5. Daily routine helps the child concentrate on certain tasks at the time prescribed by schedule and bring necessary work to completion.
6. Activity should correspond to the child's age and strength.
7. After completion or non-completion of this or that task, one should discuss experienced emotions and understand the child's mood to know next time what they like, what they willingly do, and what not so much. It's also important to discuss achieved results and praise the child for success.
8. Give the child games that develop attention concentration and perseverance. For example, assembling puzzles, solving brain teasers, building with construction sets.
9. It's important to watch that there are no distracting factors or noises.
10. There should be personal example from parents of how started work should be brought to completion.
11. Set goals before children and help achieve them through concentration on them, getting pleasure from task completion.
12. If you invent a lengthy task, then divide it into parts so the child doesn't get overtired. Take breaks and change types of activities.
13. With age it's necessary to transition from simple games to more serious activities. Such as learning to play musical instruments, solving mathematical problems, sewing, reading aloud, food preparation. Explain this by the fact that such activities bring benefit in long-term perspective.
14. Fresh air, sunlight, physical activity, clean water, tasty and healthy food, moderation in everything, rest and faith in God

—all these factors with correct spirit and healthy body contribute to perseverance development.

15. Biblical examples from the lives of faith heroes can be powerful stimulus for imitation.
16. Avoid assigning many important tasks and assignments simultaneously.
17. If the child is stressed, then one shouldn't expect perseverance and concentration on useful things from them.
18. Support and concentrate the child's interest not only on goal achievement, but also on joy from the very process of task completion.
19. Be interested in the child's tastes and interests and find such activities that would be desirable for them.
20. Pay attention to children's curiosity and interest them in what interests you too.
21. During common dinner or bedtime, or other usual events, it's necessary to stop all activities and go do what's prescribed by household order.
22. Don't pressure the child and don't force them to be persevering when they don't want to engage in something. This can produce reverse effect. Accordingly, there should be no threats, abusive words and violence from parents.

If you think computer games are useful for mental development and capable of forming children's perseverance, then soon you will understand that this attention concentration will only concern the computer or phone screen, and in other cases absence of living interest in surrounding things will manifest. Television programs also don't develop perseverance, but teach many bad things.

If your son is concentrated on painting your cat in all colors of the rainbow, and he intends to bring this matter to completion, then it's worth interfering with this and interrupting such activity. But when he sits coloring a notebook and bit his tongue from pleasure, then under no circumstances should you hug and kiss him from tenderness. He can immediately switch to you and leave his valiant work. Let him engage in his business. He can be praised for this and some strokes in the avant-garde composition can be corrected, but it's best not to

distract his attention to yourself unnecessarily, but wait until he himself considers his work accomplished and runs to boast about it.

We are arranged so that by doing something with our hands and achieving successful result, we contribute to release of happiness and joy hormones into our body's blood, which very satisfactorily affects thoughts and feelings, and such state gladdens the heart. Children are very receptive to such processes in their body and with pleasure want to experience this again.

Your desire to train perseverance in the child should be in harmony with other upbringing methods as well.

Perseverance is the ability to concentrate on some work for prolonged time without distraction by external factors. This skill helps bring started work to completion, not abandoning it halfway.

Study of the Plan of Salvation requires special attention concentration and focus on important questions. Children accustomed to perseverance will be more diligent in this matter, and more beautiful revelations of God's providence will open to their view. Mind accustomed to concentration on small tasks will also be able to be attentive and prudent in more complex questions.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Eccl. 7:8,16; 9:7-9; Prov. 20:11; 22:6; Lam. 3:26-27; Eph. 4:1-3; Titus 2:6-8; 2 Tim. 3:14; 4:2 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What is perseverance? What other words fit this definition?
5. Why is it necessary to teach children perseverance and attentiveness?
6. What can destroy a child's concentration on one task?
7. Why is it better not to touch children when they are busy with useful activities?

8. Should one consider the fact that during busy play, children very attentively listen to all conversations of father and mother?
9. What awaits parents in the future if they don't teach their child perseverance?
10. What games and activities form perseverance in a child?
11. Does a child's frozen gaze on a monitor screen indicate that they are persevering?
12. What benefit do you think perseverance will bring to a child in the future?
13. Why is it necessary to alternate mental and physical activities?
14. Are you a persevering person? If yes, how did you determine this?

Training Spirituality

In every person's heart is placed the need to love and be loved. And we understand very well on a subconscious level what this is and whether it exists in our life. Also, every person at birth is given the gift of faith, which accepts everything without requiring additional proof. Children are unique in that parents can write anything in their hearts and mold little people into what they should become in the near future.

By placing certain soul qualities in a child, father and mother form a certain personality that becomes part of their culture, understands their language and becomes very similar to them in worldview.

Each of us wants to have obedient, patient, persevering, caring, attentive, smart and well-behaved children in our home. And all this is in our power. We ourselves create this masterpiece with our own hands and then reap throughout the rest of our lives what we sowed in children's hearts.

Such upbringing makes the child a law-abiding citizen of any country, who from childhood is taught culture of worthy behavior and can independently arrange their personal life. But no matter how good this person may be, all their good manners and correct behavior don't give them right to Heaven, to life among holy angels, to Eternity that will soon begin.

There is only one condition for obtaining the right to Eternal Life—this is faith in Jesus Christ. This faith differs from all other faiths because it personally introduces me to my Creator, who is also my Savior, through whom all things began to be that began to be.

From what age is it necessary to begin training spirituality? The earlier, the better. And even better to do this before birth and ask God for special wisdom and blessing for this task. While the little person is still in mother's womb, they are already receptive to everything that happens around and for them, and we don't know what influence prayers have on the developing fetus, but absence of prayers definitely produces nothing.

And when a child is born, they already know how to hear and feel the atmosphere around them. Although they don't understand the meaning and sense of father and mother's prayers, they feel warmth and love in these words. Perhaps Heaven opens to them during these prayer times, and they see what they cannot retell to us? And how easy it will be for them to understand God the Father's love when they see and hear this love in their earthly parents.

I can teach a child biblical principles. They will know all God's commandments and laws. At a certain time they may even be able to become a member of the right church, but if with all this they don't personally know Christ and have personal trusting relationships with Him, then all their knowledge and most correct behavior won't bring substantial benefit to their soul and won't give them right to life in the Heavenly Kingdom. And not to reach Eternity and not hit this target with abundance of light and opportunities—this is sin.

But how can I give someone what I don't have myself? If my spouse and I don't have personal relationships with Jesus, then what can we teach our child? What we ourselves don't have. "A disciple is not above his teacher" (Matt. 10:24).

It's possible that not knowing a foreign language, I could teach my children to understand this language and speak it using textbooks. But if they weren't born in it, this won't be their heart language.

For life with God it's necessary to be born for Him. And we parents cannot do this by our own strength, but in our power are means to bring our children to this decision and transfer this task to God.

Jesus taught that we should not hinder children from coming to Him (Matt. 19:14). And in this command is laid hope for all parents. It consists in the fact that children are created for God and naturally reach toward Him, and if they are not hindered, then they will gladly come to Jesus and learn from Him.

Not to hinder doesn't mean only not to put barriers, but also means to stimulate children's interest in spiritual and direct young mind toward eternal truths.

Not to hinder children from coming to Jesus is also teaching them heavenly principles of life. God cooperates with believing parents and in special way conveys to the child's consciousness and conscience much of what parents are unable to give. When we see how our daughter asks us for forgiveness for actions unknown to us, we understand that this happens under action of the Holy Spirit in her heart. She cannot resist this conviction and comes with repentance to us, and then to God.

When you teach children that God hears their prayers and answers them, they don't argue and don't require extra proof. They simply go and pray. They learn something from their parents' prayers, repeating what is customary to say in their house. But the most interesting happens when their hearts open under Holy Spirit influence, and they begin to ask for great and much, believing they will receive.

Parents' task also includes teaching children which prayers have quick answers, and which the Lord doesn't answer immediately, where God says no, and in something He asks to wait. Children quickly absorb this science, and the Lord rewards their faith with His wonderful answers.

Not to hinder a child from coming to Christ is to read and tell the young creature about Jesus's life, assuring that the Lord loves little children very much, and adults too. Children very much like to hear about God who loves children so much that He gave His beloved Son for their salvation. They believe this God loves them too, and naturally respond to Him the same way.

I have many times tried preaching to different children about God's love and always saw the same result—children reach toward the loving God, and they don't mind receiving this love from me in form of kind words, praise and hugs. Children very quickly fall in love with Jesus, and He accepts them, blessing in

all other spheres of life. Blessed are those parents who understand this and bring their children to Jesus.

The most important thing that parents can and should do for their child is to personally introduce them to Jesus and teach their child to have close relationships with the Savior. When this process is launched, this will be the strongest foundation for all subsequent virtues.

Take any kindest character trait that you want to see in your child and try to present it without Christ in the heart. What do we get? Spirit of wickedness in heavenly places. Fallen angels are beautiful in their appearance and possess good manners, but their hearts are filled with deadly poison. They believe in God but tremble from His power and authority.

Faith in God and friendly relationships with the Creator teach many useful things that lay solid foundation for righteous life.

We cannot transfer our faith, love and righteousness to our children in any way, but with our personal example, persistent instructions and tireless prayers we are capable of bringing our family members to Christ, introducing them to basics of faith, showing how this faith helps us, and observing what choice young mind will make.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Eph. 6:4; 2 Tim. 3:14-17; Prov. 22:6; 2 Kings 11:21; 12:1-2; Ps. 71:17-18; Prov. 1:7-9; 4:1-27; 6:20-23; 1 Cor. 4:14-16 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. How do you understand training spirituality?
5. Why is it necessary to instill spiritual knowledge and values in a child?
6. Is Bible teaching the strongest foundation for spiritual upbringing?
7. What will happen if spiritual instructions are postponed until the age when your child must choose their life path themselves and then offer them biblical principles as something better?

8. From what age is it best to begin spiritual instructions?
9. What to do if I didn't understand the importance of religious upbringing from early age, and children have already grown up and gone to school where they're not taught this either?
10. Do believing parents need to be taught how to instruct their children in faith?
11. Why is it so important to bring children to Christ?
12. How do you understand Christ's expression from Matt. 19:14: "...Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven"? What could this mean?
13. Will God cooperate in training a child's spirituality if parents ask for wisdom from above in this matter?
14. What is the best way to begin children's spiritual education?

Instilling Spirituality

Through what channels is the beauty of God's character revealed to the world and the possibility to know God as a Loving and Caring Father? Through nature and His creation, through the Bible, which is God's Word, through His law, which expresses God's combination of mercy and justice, through the life and death of our Savior Jesus Christ and through the consistent life of people believing in God. All these channels are chosen by God to carry through them to the world the message about the unshakeable beauty of God's character and reveal to all creation unconditional God's love and care.

All these means are good for every reasonable person so that through them they can know their Creator and discover for themselves the constancy of God's love, the power of God's Word and see that wonderful manifestation of God's providence that God grants to those who thirst and seek Him.

A small child is not an exception from whom it's necessary to hide the beauty of God's environment. An infant is also receptive to everything with which the Lord in His care has surrounded us. They are capable of perceiving the language of God's love and knowing their Creator through contact with nature and love of their parents.

Until a certain age, believing parents are direct representatives of God to children.

Fresh air, sunlight, majesty of trees, beautiful landscapes, bird singing, diversity of flowers and colors—all this is perceived by children's mind as beautiful living environment, and infant's feelings intertwine with primordial beauty and harmony of nature, and they subconsciously know the Creator's greatness and come into contact with God's love in pure form. Nature speaks to the heart and feelings of each of us, and it communicates just as well with small representatives of humanity. It is written in Job 12:7-10: "But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you; and the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you; and the fish

of the sea will explain to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this, in whose hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind?"

God knows how to communicate with children through nature. Through such contact with sense organs, an infant receives first lessons of knowing God and how good it is with Him. Countryside in this case is an ideal place for correct instilling of spirituality.

Also huge influence on child's feelings is exerted not only by contemplation but also by contact with nature. Grass and earth were created to be walked on, clean air to be breathed, sources of living water to be washed in and drunk from, flowers to gladden with their beauty and smell, animal world to amaze with its diversity and uniqueness. The book of nature contains so many amazing discoveries for those who begin to know it through personal contact that no artificial things and reproductions can ever replace this. And behind all this science of nature stands the wise Creator who knows how to connect human heart with His through His creation.

In every child is placed the instinct of faith that helps know this world and its rules without doubt and criticism. And when awakening of mind occurs in the child, then all words come alive and produce certain images and scenes in little person's thinking. This faith helps young mind know surrounding world, culture and customs, but it doesn't give salvation. It's always important for parents to remember the fact that true "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Not innate instinct, but knowledge of God's promises and instructions makes a child a believing person. Faith spoken of here takes its beginning from promises of God's Word, asks for what is already promised by Him, and patiently waits for when this will be fulfilled in believer's life.

Children are very practical in testing promises. If they are taught that God answers all prayers, then they immediately begin to ask for what they want and what they consider necessary. And such instruction brings harm and destroys children's faith.

Children believe everyone and everything, especially their loving parents. And father and mother's task includes teaching these young creatures what is true faith, and what is naivety and simplicity of child's soul, which are beautiful in their purity, but which are insufficient to rely on God with firm confidence.

Children perfectly hear conversations of father with mother and what they say about God, how they pray and what they ask for. Children see parents' joy from answered prayers and rejoice together with adults, sometimes not understanding the true reason. They willingly accept what is established in their family. If it's not customary in your family to have conversations about God's mercy and love, and Jesus's miracles, then any story about this Person will be something unusual for them, since He is rarely contemplated in their house.

You won't give children what you don't possess yourself, and theory of faith may reveal something to young consciousness, but the child won't know what to do with this.

Instilling spirituality doesn't happen according to certain schedule when time comes for this and children must leave everything and attentively listen to your instructions. This is accomplished throughout the day when your faith in God lives and your household constantly hears from you words of gratitude to God, brief requests for wisdom, your blessings. When your heart is filled with gratitude to the Savior, then your lips speak very clearly about this. And when you begin to tell children about the One with whom you have fellowship throughout all time, then they too want to get closer to such invisible Family Member and learn to trust Him with all their small and big cares.

It's also important to explain to children that there are conditional and unconditional promises, that the Lord answers different prayers differently, and in some cases He doesn't answer at all, that there is human will whose choice is respected, and that God needs time for fulfillment of some requests.

God loves children and answers their sincere requests, sometimes even to parents' surprise. And such relationships strengthen children's trust in Creator and encourage them to ask for more.

And if we understand, then we are exactly the same children in God's eyes, and everything we experience in our steps of faith is accessible and understandable to small children. But they don't need to be proven Creator's existence. They believe this without doubt. But they don't know requirements of the Ruler of worlds, and they need to be instructed in this, and in such way that they later instruct their children and grandchildren in all truth.

Stories about Jesus, examples of His trust in Father, Savior's reaction to certain temptations serve children as powerful visual example for imitation. We don't know how children's mind perceives this information, but Holy Spirit can draw bright pictures in children's imagination and present all your stories in colorful tones corresponding to reality. Although children like pictures, their imagination is also sufficiently developed for them to understand many spiritual things in correct light.

God could have left us a film about Himself, but He left written Word, and it works.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Deut. 6:4-9; 11:18-22; Prov. 22:6; Rom. 10:13-15; Hab. 2:4; Heb. 10:35-39; James 2:19-20; Prov. 6:20-23 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. Why is it so important to instill knowledge about God from the very first days of life?
5. How to instill in a child faith that moves God's hand?
6. Can parents, without extra instructions, help a child become a believing person?
7. Do you think children observe how and what their parents believe in?

8. Does nature have beneficial influence on development of children's faith?
9. Can nature and animal world tell children about God more than the Bible does?
10. Why is it so important from very young age to instruct children in obedience to God's law?
11. Will a child's faith grow from hearing God's Word?
12. Should parents count on the church to handle spiritual upbringing of their children?
13. What to do if children don't want to believe in anything and listen to nothing about God?
14. Do you think children believe God's promises?

Lessons of Faith

In every person at birth is placed the instinct of faith that serves as the most powerful convincing means in knowing world order and helps the child absorb skills, culture and traditions of their environment without critical analysis.

There is such a proverb that apples don't fall far from the apple tree. And we are not surprised if we see families where children resemble their parents and carry from the family those family spiritual values that were instilled in them from birth.

They say if you want to know what your wife will be like, then observe her mother's behavior. And there is sense in this definition. Parents pass to children who they themselves are, and sometimes instill in children what they would like to become but couldn't for some reasons. For example, I know one family where parents were not musicians, but took care that their three daughters received musical education before marriage and could pass this skill to their children. And they succeeded.

But teaching new sciences or passing the most beautiful knowledge and experience is not the main task in raising children. The most important skill that parents can instill in their children is faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. It is precisely this faith that gives a person right to Eternal Life and opens the growing person's heart to direct path to all Heavenly blessings.

If we take and try to depict this transmission of one's faith to subsequent generations as visual example, then this is like relay race where it's important for the next participant not only to run first, but also to take the relay baton from previous team member. No matter how fast the athlete runs, if there's no baton in their hands, then their result is not counted, and the team is considered to have lost. If the runner has nothing to pass to the next relay participant, then all their running will be in vain.

I want to clarify that in God's plan every race participant who carried the relay baton is a winner, no matter how fast they ran, and all teams participating in this competition are declared winners if they held this cherished object in their hands. Many come to this race from the side and receive relay baton from their believing brethren to pass it further to their children and those the Lord sends them. And how important it is to pass to the child precisely what you firmly hold in your own hands and what you yourself live by.

In transmitting faith to their children, all Higher Heavenly Forces are involved, who are more interested than us in salvation of every person, but at the same time reckon with human choice, with their spiritual values and hereditary succession.

It is written that a disciple is not above the teacher (Matt. 10:24). It's important for parents to lay foundation of faith in child's heart and transfer this little person into God's hands, where the Lord Himself will continue to form your child's life and lead them through various trials. The Bible gives us examples of such succession. This is Joseph from Egypt, prophet Samuel, Daniel and his three friends in Babylon.

It's very important to teach children that God is not a kind wizard fulfilling all desires, but very Wise Heavenly Father who knows all children's needs. That He is faithful to what He promised and gives us precisely what we need most.

Children's faith takes its beginning in parents' life example, and after this it is established in heart through constant instructions in truth and through father and mother voicing God's promises that are abundantly described in the Bible.

God's Word teaches that words of God's law should be taught in homes of God's people tirelessly, everywhere and on constant basis. Deut. 6:4-9. Hearing repeated biblical instructions, children quickly memorize them, analyze what they heard and at some point begin to understand that if the Lord promised this, then He can fulfill this at their request. They try and receive amazing answers.

Instruction in faith also includes explaining to children that there are conditional promises, for receiving which it's necessary to fulfill what God expects from us, and there are unconditional ones that will be fulfilled in God's appointed time, despite quality of our faith. These include beginning and end of judgment, outpouring of seven plagues, Second Coming of Christ, Millennial Kingdom, final destruction of sin and all sinners.

Children should also be taught that for prayers about healing other people, about their conversion from darkness to light or about resurrection from dead, we don't know how the Lord will answer, because we don't see whether this healing will be to God's glory, or it may become great curse for the person.

Any children's prayer practice should be encouraged by parents, and if any inaccuracies are noticed, then it's necessary to very gently correct the child and explain how to pray correctly next time.

One should also tell that singing spiritual songs or verses from Bible are also peculiar prayers to which Jesus also answers.

It's important that children tell you about their faith in God and that they are heard. They learn this from you, parents, and from your testimonies. Listening to children's prayers, you will be surprised how your sons and daughters memorize your expressions and then speak with God in your language.

If my little daughter sits at our feet and plays with blocks when my wife and I share blessings of answered prayers, then I know for sure that she very attentively listens to everything we talk about. And especially her attention and hearing is attracted to the moment when we switch to whisper and tell each other important truths "in secret." Children so like to be admitted to adult secrets! But what to do? Children also need to be told simple things in language understandable to them. And what they want to listen to with special interest, they remember immediately and forever.

Children need to be taught that God always fulfills what He promised because He is God, and His word is faithful and true.

And any contact with this Word of God opens God's power to those who pray. We don't pray to earn God's love through these actions, but because the Lord already loves us and thirsts to pour streams of His love on us again and again in answers to our requests.

Children need to be taught not to make God accomplice to their crimes and not ask Him to close parents' or other people's eyes to their sins. God is not tempted by evil and teaches us to repent and confess our misdeeds.

It's also worth teaching that prayers can be not only in form of forgiveness and petitions, but also thanksgiving, intercessory, praise, glorifying Creator. They may sound like conversations with Heavenly Friend, but respect and deep reverence for our Savior should always be present in them.

To ask God for what He didn't promise means to tempt Him and show presumption. Children's faith should be formed on knowledge of expressed and written God's will. They should hope that the Lord will fulfill everything that was promised to them. Teaching our children faith, we ourselves begin to learn this and better understand these lessons.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Isa. 46:11; 55:8-11; Gen. 41:32; 1 Cor. 9:24-27; Matt. 21:21-22; Rom. 1:17; 3:28; 11:16; Gal. 2:20; 3:24-27; Heb. 6:11-12 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What is the difference between children's faith and faith in God?
5. What is faith that saves?
6. Can father and mother instill in children what they themselves don't have?
7. Is believing in God and believing that He will fulfill His promises in your life the same thing?
8. Why is it so important for parents to teach their children trust in God's Word?

9. Do parents learn together with their children when teaching them faith?
10. Can one justify their ignorance in spiritual instruction of children by saying they have no faith in power of these instructions?
11. Should parents' life correspond to what they teach their children?
12. Can parents destroy with their own hands what they built for so long?
13. Do you think your child will learn something if you teach them this?
14. Is it so important to teach children to trust God's word?
Could it be that they will somehow understand this themselves and learn somewhere themselves?

Trusting Relationships

In the Bible there is one golden rule that Jesus gave to humanity in His Sermon on the Mount. We read in Matt. 7:12: "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

All healthy and sane parents are inclined to love their children and care for them from the very first days of their life. And such relationships between children and parents are considered norm of life in any society. Influence of loving father and mother won't be replaced by anyone, and it's incomparable to any other influence under which children may fall if parents are alive and in the family.

Parents by their status and influence for the child are God's representatives. And the child is son or daughter to them. And this connection is so close that if it's preserved and developed in correct relationships of love and friendship, then it will never break and even after death of father or mother will exert its influence and constantly remind of the good and beautiful that was in these relationships.

But parents can give true example of trusting relationships only if they themselves have such relationships with their Heavenly Father. Although they may not always understand how trusting these relationships should be with the One they don't see, their child who appeared in the world becomes their teacher in this matter and clearly shows by example of young creature what love God the Father has for us, what grace Lord Jesus shows to us and what fellowship we can have with Holy Spirit and in Holy Spirit.

Trusting relationships without faith in God can be just as strong as between members in believing families, but such secular connections have no solid foundation and true understanding of final goal that must definitely be achieved. Eternity is worth getting into and sacrificing everything, becoming worthy citizen of Heavenly Kingdom.

Trusting relationships are what children and parents feel comfortable, safe and open in, not afraid to share their thoughts and feelings, while respecting another person's right to such attitude.

Love and thirst for trust is placed in every person, but it's expressed more openly and accessibly in children's nature. Father and mother enter their child's heart and remain there as long as they desire this, doing everything possible on their part to establish themselves in this mutual trust and preserve it in all trials.

We are surrounded by godless world. Enemy of soul constantly seeks whom to devour, and our carnal nature will always rush to insert wedge between us and our children, conduct separation and create abyss in relationships. But parents are builders and keepers of trust, and they are given authority from above for building such relationships.

Care for child's welfare, for their comfort, for their nutrition and physical needs is good in itself, but it shouldn't exclude spiritual needs of person. Child is not only physical being, but also emotional and spiritual God's creation. Natural need is placed in them for everything concerning mental, spiritual and physical development and upbringing. Unconditional parental love is perceived by children's mind as natural living environment in which all beautiful qualities of child's soul will harmoniously grow and develop.

First knowledge of good and love young creature receives in their family from their parents. Father and mother's love opens to children's mind path to trusting relationships that continue to be built and strengthened throughout subsequent life.

Parents go through various trials of their relationships in which, to become closer to children, they need to make efforts and deny themselves much for the sake of those who were given to them by God. But it's worth it, and reward for faithful parents will be very great already in their lifetime, and then throughout all Eternity.

Having father and mother as friend, child will naturally come to them with any questions, joys and discoveries. Parents will always be first people with whom they will share their experiences and worries, expecting support and comfort from them. Although age makes child more independent and autonomous, trusting relationships with their close ones are always that solid foundation on which they can build all their subsequent life, understanding that in this foundation Lord Jesus Himself is present, who also wants to have trusting relationships with His friends, and no less than earthly father and mother.

"Look, dad!!! Look, mom!!!"—these exclamations of trust will sound constantly and attentive gaze of parents will always be expected. You will have to hear thousands of "whys" and give thousands of "because" to them, so that next thousands of "what for" are directed precisely to you. Who, if not God-fearing parents, can give most correct answer to all children's questions and direct children's attention and energy in right direction? Sometimes many children's questions or statements may be inappropriate or silly, distract parents from important matters and disconcert adult consciousness, but one should set heart to always give wise answers, and if this is impossible to do right now, then promise to talk about this later and then keep one's promise and listen to young creature, satisfying their natural curiosity and thirst for knowledge. It's precisely in these trifles that trust is formed, and in them it can also be destroyed. When all children's joys and expectations meet parental attention and understanding in spirit of love, then father and mother will always be in first place. Their child will share with them everything they experience.

It's also important for parents to see in their child not spine-chewer, not juice-squeezer and breaker of everything in the world, but creative personality who not so quickly, but still will be taught careful attitude to things and gentle communication with parents. Not every dirt on clothes is worth noticing in opposition to joyful spirit of pioneer who hurries to tell you what pleasure jumping in puddles and crawling on ground gives them.

If you see that your behavior plunges your child into despondency, then it's worth understanding what I'm doing wrong and what needs to be reconsidered in my life so that my pupils are happy in my presence.

Mutual agreement and trust between parents and children is the greatest treasure that needs to be carefully collected bit by bit and cherished like apple of eye. No most important matter can be more significant if it destroys these relationships. No effort will seem too great if trust and mutual sympathy will be formed thanks to it.

Participation in children's games and entertainment, answers to questions, joint walks and events, help in affairs and lessons, teaching new sciences and much more—all this contributes to preservation of mutual trust and carries great prospects for future.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read John 16:27; Rom. 12:9-10; Col. 3:20-21; 1 Cor. 8:2-3; Prov. 3:11-12; 4:1-9; 12:1; 27:9; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 John 3:18; 4:7 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What are trusting relationships?
5. Why is it so important to have mutual trust with your children?
6. What benefit do trusting relationships with children bring?
7. How can one win child's trust and preserve it over many years?
8. What to do if trusting relationships with child are destroyed and you so want to restore them?
9. Is there anything in common between trust in God and trust in parents?
10. Can one be oneself with those toward whom there is no trust?
11. How can trusting relationships be destroyed?
12. Should love be present in trust?
13. How far can you let in those with whom you have trusting relationships?

14. Does the Lord trust you?

Building Trust

What will happen if you want to build a good and solid house, but at the same time you don't consult with anyone and start buying the cheapest materials, hiring low-paid workers and don't bother learning construction laws? It's quite likely that you will build something, but there's no guarantee that this something will be sturdy, durable and safe. And spontaneous natural phenomena and catastrophes will very quickly reveal all hidden defects and teach you that in certain spheres of life it's necessary to think not only about money, but also about a wise approach, even if it initially seems long and expensive.

Trust is something that is so easy to receive from another due to an innate need, but to maintain it, it's necessary to be an honest, open and decent person. In our time, lies and deception, rudeness and greed, envy and many other vices are very developed, which destroy trust between people and bring this spirit into families.

If trust between spouses is destroyed in any family, this will deprive them of the main foundation of their relationship, and they will be left only with legal responsibility before the state and society. And with this responsibility they will somehow survive and achieve something together, dreaming that a miracle will happen and everything will change at one moment.

But how can you start believing someone who is unreliable? How can you build love with someone who bites you and doesn't value you? It's difficult to answer.

Building trust has its own laws, which can create something new and beautiful on ruins and establish what was originally laid on the foundation of faith, love and friendship.

Any family begins beautifully and romantically. I haven't seen a single wedding where the groom and bride argued and cursed each other. But when time passes and trials come, then the most interesting begins.

Building trusting relationships with a child takes its beginning from mutual trust between spouses. But even if this doesn't exist due to the absence of faith in God in one of them, the faithful side can build something good and solid. Children feel very well those whom they can trust, and quickly become attached to those who live by the laws of trust and love.

Where to begin? If you already have something destroyed in relationships with children, and there's no hope and wisdom to restore it, then it's best to start with repentance, in which you will sincerely regret that you allowed such a spirit in your life. First discuss this question with God and ask Him for forgiveness for your mistakes. The Gospel begins with the words: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near" (Mark 1:15), and if you realize your mistakes and repent of them, then it will be very easy for you as parents to find a path to the child's heart. Not children, but parents build trusting relationships. Children gladly enter into them and live in them. They are more open to trust than we imagine.

Recognition of one's guilt and openness on the part of parents disposes the child's heart to trust and gives the child hope for something better and good. Don't rush. You will still have much to do, break in yourself and discover new things. But knowing that this is possible, and faith that it will work out, is powerful support, even when it's dark around.

1. It's characteristic for children to be open and boldly express their emotions and feelings. Listen to them attentively and don't rush to rudely cut off their speech. Listen and hear what childish lips are telling you.
2. Let the child understand that he is a full-fledged family member, whose opinion must be considered, and that he is irreplaceable in his uniqueness.
3. Depending on whether your children are joyful or sad, it's important to be their emotional support at all times.
4. Every person has personal boundaries that must be known and observed. The child must understand that his personal space is inviolable, and that you too have your boundaries, which are clearly defined and which it's better not to violate.

5. Prepare for the fact that your son or daughter will bring much negativity from the world, and after hearing them out, give your assessment of what happened and separate good from evil.
6. Accept the child as he is. Understand his interests and inclinations and use these features for his benefit. Children are interested in doing what they like. They are more energetic in those things that are close to their heart.
7. With any punishment, it's necessary to explain the reason and how bad the violator's behavior was. Any shouting, humiliation, rudeness, intimidation destroys trust. And the punishment itself must correspond to the measure of guilt and be fair, so that the child recognizes this and gives consent. If you are convinced that there is no guilt on his part, then don't rush to carry out extreme measures. It's better not to punish at all than to punish undeservedly.
8. Consult with the child in solving family tasks and questions. Give him the right to make small decisions in small plans.
9. Fulfill all your promises. Ask again whether the little one has any expectations from you, what he is counting on, and you perhaps forgot.
10. Don't be afraid to talk about your mistakes and your imperfection. Children see all this perfectly, and your admission will not diminish your authority in their eyes. Be honest with yourself, and with children too.
11. Be consistent and predictable in your behavior. Don't be what you are not, and don't start doing what you don't intend to continue.
12. Allow the child to make his own decisions and make his own mistakes, bearing his own consequences, not scolding him for sluggishness or stupidity, but giving him the right to seek a way out of the situation himself, slightly giving a hint in the right direction.
13. If the child disagrees with something, then he should have the right to express his point of view without condemnation from your side. If he is wrong, then parents can also calmly and openly explain this. Don't pressure his will with your authority and wisdom, let him understand that everything can be negotiated with you.

14. Don't try to control every step of the child. Give him freedom to do what he chooses for himself within the framework of home order. Give him the right to a personal life and experiences and the right to share with you only what he wants to tell.
15. Decide for yourself what family holidays, traditions and rituals are acceptable in your family (for example birthdays and wedding anniversary) and actively participate all together in preparing for them and never forget these dates, taking vacation for this time and inviting guests whom everyone will be glad to see.
16. Building trusting relationships, consider the age and emotional maturity of the child, expecting from him what is acceptable for his level. Don't reproach him for his young age and don't tell him: "It's not for you to teach me," adding to this phrase such humiliating words as, for example, "snot-nose."
17. Don't try to learn by heart all these and other rules and laws of building trust. Ask God to write them in your heart, remind you of what you've learned and guide your consciousness when there is need.

When trust already exists, then it's very easy to build and maintain it in the spirit of love and friendship.

1. Trust without love cannot be solid and mutual. And unconditional parental love makes trusting relationships a special fortress, where the child feels safe and where he is comfortable sharing everything that lies on his heart.
2. Don't scold children for their sincerity and honesty in trusting relationships, even if they share very bad things. And don't rush in these cases to act to fix something to the detriment of the child's reputation. Prayer for wisdom from above will tell you how to act correctly and what to undertake in such cases.
3. There's a saying among people: "A smart thought comes afterwards." And this one: "After a fight, you don't wave your fists." Don't present yourself as very smart with those pieces of advice that are impossible to apply to fix something.

4. Set aside time for heartfelt conversations with the child and observe him. Perhaps he will want to tell you something earlier than you plan to listen to him.
5. Remember that you, parents, in your attitude toward each other and toward other people, give children a clear example of how reliable you are for trusting relationships. Your respect, respect for others' opinions, your reaction to this or that event - all this is noted in the child's consciousness and has a special influence on the development of character and thinking of your children. It's characteristic for them to imitate those whom they love and respect. Even if you don't teach them what you do yourself, they will still copy your actions and words. You are a clear example for them and the simplest textbook by which they study many things and form their tastes and habits.
6. Don't force the child to eat what, in your opinion, is healthy, but he doesn't want it. But at the same time don't replace this dish with something tastier, but explain to him that in such case he won't get anything else. And after the meal, find out the reason for his refusal and take his explanation as a note to yourself.
7. Show interest in what interests your child, what captivates him and what he enjoys doing. Cooperate with him in his hobby and take direct participation in his activities when he asks for it.
8. If the child has his own place for storing "treasures" or other valuable things that are safe for life and health, then consider this his personal space, which cannot be entered without his knowledge and consent. This can be anything from a collection of candy wrappers to favorite toys. But it's worth teaching him that all these things should always be neatly folded in a certain place and not scattered throughout the house.
9. It's important to remember and consider that each generation has its own tastes, values and views on life. Although you will try to instill your worldview, also consider the new life position of your children and grandchildren.
10. Trusting relationships are built for life and should pass from generation to generation, and be maintained until death

itself, regardless of how long you have lived. Don't judge adult children for a different view on life priorities and values, but if this doesn't harm their soul, let them know your personal opinion too, while respecting their choice.

11. Each child has his own uniqueness and distinctiveness.

Don't try to remake these unique properties of his individuality to fit yourself, trying to embody all your expectations in him.

12. Each stage of the child's growing up changes his behavior and views on life. It's important for parents to understand this and adapt to the new age and grow together with their children, keeping pace with the times.

13. Don't condemn your child during failures and don't criticize him for bad grades or life mistakes. With special caution, learn to direct his consciousness toward correcting the situation and give those pieces of advice that in the future will be able to help and fix something. Believe in him and tell him about it, making it clear that you love him no matter what.

14. The older the child becomes, the more freedom of action he receives. But at the same time, more responsibility for his behavior is placed on him. And in this growth it's necessary to have balance within the framework of freedom and permissible boundaries of the child's behavior, which he must understand and respect, so that in his striving for freedom he doesn't lose your trust.

15. If the child has sinned against you and, realizing his action, repented, then forgive him and never remind him of these mistakes and sins. And if these sins will have sad consequences for you, then don't criticize the child for what he has already repented of.

16. Teach children to reduce any conflict or unusual stressful situation, if possible, to general peace, and if this doesn't depend on them, then to their personal peace with God. Make it clear that peace in the heart is that quiet harbor where they should always return. And make it so that your communication with them contributes to this return. Teach children that their inner world is very important to you too,

and then it will be easier for them to ask you for help during a crisis.

17. Develop in children a sense of self-worth, reminding them that they are children of the Heavenly King. Support this status in them and show them due respect in the family hierarchy and subordination. Don't devalue their dignity for their mistakes, but help them rise to the proper height and value themselves in the light of the high price paid for their salvation.
18. The child may have his own personal secrets or secrets of other friends. Let him understand that you respect this right to have his secrets and won't enter this territory without his consent. Trust implies that not everything should be under parental control. And if they decided to share someone's secret with you, then don't betray your child to other people. But at the same time pray that the Lord reveals to you all the sins of your children while they are under your influence.
19. Don't compare your child with other children to his detriment. Don't evoke in him a feeling of inferiority because someone is better. This humiliates him and destroys trust in you.
20. Consider your child's choice, starting from his hobbies, and with age - with the choice of his profession, life partner and his life path. Respect this freedom, but don't hesitate to wisely express your opinion too, if it differs from his and they want to hear you.
21. Share with children your life experience, your experiences and mistakes, your victories and joys, your secrets and discoveries. They are also interested in knowing how your inner world is arranged and how much useful things are hidden in your hearts.
22. Respect and acceptance of the child's friends also forms strong trusting relationships that extend beyond the family.
23. Support the child's initiatives. Inspire him to new feats and discoveries. Be his sail in his life path.
24. The greatest trust in children is evoked by those fathers who love their mother very much and don't hide this love, and constantly demonstrate it, and then transfer this model of

relationships to them, constantly reminding children that their mama is the best in the world. In mutual love, all family members feel needed, irreplaceable and protected.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Please read Col. 3:21, Eccl. 4:17; Is.30:21; Eph 6:4; 1Pet.2:9-10; 2Chr31:16; Gen.16:19; Rom.12:10; Luke.2:46-49; 1Sam.20:17; Gen.4:5-7; Neh.8:10; Gen.48:17-19; Amos 3:3; Job 1:4-5; Gal.6:7, in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What mistakes can lead to the destruction of trust?
5. What happens to a family if trust between spouses is destroyed?
6. Is it possible to restore trust if it has been lost?
7. Why do children trust faster those who live by the laws of love?
8. Why is it important to listen to children attentively and not interrupt them?
9. How does emotional support from parents influence a child's trust?
10. Why is it important to accept a child as he is?
11. Why is fulfilling promises so important for trusting relationships?
12. How does parents' recognition of their mistakes influence children's attitude toward them?
13. Why can't trust without love be solid?
14. How can parents build trust with children even if their views on life differ?

Temperance

Teaching temperance to children should begin with their parents under the influence of the Holy Spirit. If parents have no idea what temperance is and what it's needed for, then they will hardly teach this to their children.

Temperance is a conscious refusal from what can cause harm to the soul and body, it's conscious limitation of oneself in pleasures that are not vitally important, it's moderate consumption and application of what is beneficial and brings joy and benefit.

Temperance extends to such spheres: food, drinks, words, intimate relationships, thoughts, actions, entertainment, emotions, reading, finances, sports, shopping, games, communication and so forth. It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal.5:22-23) and brings joy to the soul in obedience and freedom from everything that can harm the soul.

This is not simply refusal from something, but a conscious choice in favor of something better. This is the highest manifestation of freedom and independence in Christ. This is a narrow path that gladdens the heart of those walking on it.

Limiting oneself in what can bring harm may seem from the outside like something deficient and fanatical, but when there is understanding of what's happening, then one can quickly and easily evaluate the advantage of temperance over intemperance.

The most cruel struggle occurs in the area of appetite, especially among those who indulge their desires and are accustomed to pandering to their tastes. Behind intemperance in food stand the spirits of wickedness in the heavenly places, which through the lust of the eyes, tastes and smells catch the soul in their nets. A person who is accustomed to unconsciously follow the lead of these temptations doesn't have inner strength for conscious temperance and limitation in the pleasure of eating. And even if an intemperate person decides to win victory in this sphere, relying on his own strength, then perhaps

several times he will have success, but in the end his fleshly nature will fall and surrender under the onslaught of the demon of appetite.

Temperance in food doesn't imply complete refusal from food for the sake of temperance. It's not expressed in fanatical neglect of all beneficial and nutritious food, but it determines for itself a measure of what's beneficial, considering place, time and necessity.

If a person has a certain daily routine and schedule for taking food, then this helps establish certain frameworks for unnecessary food temptations, excluding all possible snacking and desserts.

The organism of each of us is individual and what may please one and bring him benefit, for another may be not tasty and even harmful. But the measure in food is practically the same for all people. God didn't create us as gluttons who can eat everything in a row tirelessly, but provided protective properties of the organism in case of overeating.

Among those people who refuse meat and dairy food, the vice of overeating is widespread, which they may not even realize, considering that immoderate consumption of tasty and beneficial food won't harm. When many wonderful dishes are placed on the table, then reason shuts off and stops controlling the volume of consumed food, hoping that the stomach will inform in time about the limit of its possibilities. And prayer for blessing blocks the will, which should say "no" to any excess in time, and the impression is created that if I asked God to bless something, then this implies everything that will get into my stomach. Prayer of faith sanctifies all beneficial food, but it doesn't bless gluttony and doesn't justify intemperance.

Not always can the eyes evaluate the volume of what gets on the spoon or fork, but reason tuned to temperance suggests how much my plate holds and when an addition to the established norm becomes dangerous.

Limiting oneself in food volume should also be guided by understanding of how nutritious this food is. If I refuse

everything but don't replace it with anything, then I risk exhausting my vital resources and bringing irreparable harm to health.

The approximate volume of food for an adult person ranges from 500 to 800 milliliters of total mass of consumed food, including drinks, per one meal, two-three times a day.

If food is very liquid, then accordingly its volume can be greater than solid food. But here each person should determine for himself his own measure, understanding and following which will preserve from many temptations.

Food and taking meals is what we need every day, except during times of fasting, therefore this activity should always be under the control of reason and will.

Preparation of tasty and beneficial food is an art that every believing person should possess. A time is coming when everything that you didn't grow and prepare yourself may represent a serious danger to health, due to all kinds of poisons and additives that preserve food from spoilage during long storage. Trust is a good thing in relation to God and close people, but in relation to mass producers of food products it's worth turning on critical thinking and double-checking everything that's offered to you. The best products are what you receive from God's hands in your own garden, and then prepare yourself to eat.

The main causes of many deadly diseases of our time are: improper nutrition, chemical dependency and stress. In all these categories it's necessary to consciously protect oneself from direct contact with these sources and study one's reaction to these questions.

If one can quickly deal with harmful food, tobacco and drugs, then with toxic people and one's inadequate reaction to them, it's not always possible to part ways.

The best and most reliable way to develop the gift of temperance in oneself is to learn this from Jesus, ask for His strength and wisdom and rely on His participation in your life

regarding these questions. He won't leave anyone and those whom He specifically frees will be truly free and happy.

We would be very surprised by the statistics of diseases and premature deaths due to intemperance that reigns in many spheres of human activity, if everything was revealed to us as it is. Moderation in everything - this is the motto that should be written on every heart, in every family of people dedicated to God.

Prayer of repentance and trust in God in this question gives Christ power to teach us this virtue and inscribe these laws in our hearts.

As intemperance opens the door for many other diseases and vices, so temperance carries within itself many blessings both in health and in spiritual life. The mind of a temperate person is enlightened, receptivity is sharpened, will and reason rule over desires, feelings and habits. True freedom is freedom from the power of sin, from any dependency, from perverted appetite and weaknesses. A free person is the master of his happiness and is capable of understanding God's will and submitting to it, considering this an advantage and blessing for himself.

Temperance makes a person master of life capable of teaching this art to his children.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Luke.21:34; Dan.1:8; Phil.3:19; John.8:36; Prov.16:32; 21:23; 25:28; 1Pet.2:11; 1Cor.9:25; 10:31; Rom.6:12-13; Eph.4:26; James.1:19, in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. Why does teaching temperance to children begin with parents?
5. How does temperance influence a person's mental and physical health?
6. What practical steps will help develop temperance in daily life?
7. How is the habit of temperance formed?

8. Why is it most difficult for a person to show temperance specifically in the area of food?
9. Why doesn't prayer before eating cancel the need to control one's appetite?
10. How does temperance in finances help avoid debts and unnecessary expenses?
11. How did Jesus Christ teach temperance by His example?
12. How does intemperance open doors to sin and spiritual degradation?
13. What spiritual forces stand behind intemperance in food?
14. What should one do if one wants to be temperate but can't manage it?

Teaching Temperance

But the fruit of the Holy Spirit is temperance. (Gal.5:22-23). Teaching temperance is just as important an aspect of children's family education as the development and cultivation of all other qualities of the soul. Parents cannot ignore it and exclude it from the general process, but they need to form this character trait somewhere through their personal example, somewhere through instruction, somewhere through limitation and persuasion, being guided not by the problems of one day, but foreseeing far-reaching consequences.

It's very important that in this education there exists a fundamental balance that would extend to all spheres of children's life activities and teach them reasonable temperance in everything.

Children are very observant and it's characteristic for them to imitate their parents and repeat in their lives what adults do, how they limit themselves in something, how they react to irritants, how their words and actions correspond to one another.

Parents also need to understand that strict prohibitions, though sometimes very necessary, do not form principles in character and are not capable of developing good qualities of the soul in the child. While he is small and is under the power of parents, he simply has nowhere to go and has to obey parents, but when he begins to choose and decide for himself how to live, it will be a surprise for many how quickly all prohibitions are violated and how fearlessly their son does what he was never allowed to do. In any prohibition there should be present logic, explanation and common sense, not the statement: "I told you so!"

The influence of society or peers has special power, which not everyone can resist. And if you consider that the enemy of the soul constantly seeks a loophole to free will, then you understand how zealously one should fight for the upbringing of one's children and prepare them for independent life.

When I silently abstain from something in the presence of children, it's possible that they will somehow guess about my soul's feat and something will be deposited in their heads, but it's possible that they will miss this event, as they will be occupied with their own problems. But when I voice my behavior, give explanation to what happened, ask their opinions and assessments, then children willingly become involved in the process of my temperance and very attentively observe how I succeed at it.

Seeing how their papa refuses himself the purchase of some things and hearing his logical explanation, children learn continuity in similar situations. When I put a certain portion of food on my plate at an abundant table and to all suggestions of seconds answer that my stomach is not rubber, and I don't want to be like a soap bubble, then such a cheerful answer is quickly remembered by the child's mind and it won't be difficult for them to recall this case precisely when a similar test comes into their life.

I can also give scientific explanations to what happens in a person's organism when much different food gets into it and how it then burdens the digestive organs, and how vital forces are exhausted. Such interpretation has logical explanation in itself and children quickly accept such opinion for themselves and think about what happens in their organism when they don't limit their desires at a tasty table.

There is also in many limitations a spiritual prohibition described in the Bible and given through recommendations of the Spirit of Prophecy. If God prohibited doing or taking something as food, then it's necessary to convey this prohibition to the child's consciousness and make clear not only the logic of this limitation, but also that the Lord commands this and tests us with it.

It's good for children to know how temperance is rewarded in the future and how it influences the happy state of the soul in the present. It's not difficult for them to trace cause-and-effect relationships and draw independent conclusions about the

benefit of temperance and about the destructive consequences of intemperance.

Examples of intemperance of Adam and Eve, David and Bathsheba, the disciple Judas and other biblical heroes clearly show what negative consequences arise in the lives of those who don't know how to control their desires.

Remembering stories from the life of Joseph in Egypt, Daniel and his companions in Babylon, Jesus' victory in the wilderness, one can show children what heights temperate people reach.

Lessons of temperance, as a rule, parents begin to teach children from early age, teaching them that there are things that cannot be touched and territory where one cannot go. For example, if a child wishes to study in detail the contents of an electrical outlet and understand what else besides fingers can be stuck there, then the constant and strict prohibition of parents teaches him that this is a forbidden activity and it's better not to engage in this. The same can be said about a hot stove. It's difficult for a baby to understand parental prohibitions, but he doesn't yet have enough strength to resist. But when he is convinced by his own experience that a hot stove for children's hands is not very fun entertainment, and hot water in the tap brings pain, then these lessons are remembered by him for a long time.

Teaching temperance has much in common with teaching patience, meekness, diligence, trust and obedience. Many lessons of temperance extend to other spheres of the child's worldview. Though these lessons should cover all spheres of life, special attention should be paid to temperance in nutrition.

Children, like adults, eat food many times a day and they need to know the measure of their portion and be grateful for what they have and receive. Children need to be instructed about the harm of snacking and not give in to their desires and requests to give them something tasty. But if they were promised something special, but at the proper time, then this must be fulfilled to reward their expectations.

Explanatory conversations about beneficial and healthy food, about the harm of overeating, about the benefit of fresh vegetables and fruits, are best conducted not during the general meal, but before it. For example, when mama prepares salad and uses special vegetables for this, then one can tell children about how many minerals and vitamins are contained in fresh greens and what benefit it brings to the organism. When a person understands the benefit of what is offered to him, then his faith in this makes the beneficial dish very effective medicine against many diseases and psychosomatics plays an important role in this. And then, similar knowledge about the benefit of this or that food contributes to correct choice and limitation in what's harmful.

There are games that form patience and temperance, where one needs to wait one's turn, where one needs to postpone reward, where self-control is important, where desires are controlled and where self-discipline is formed.

In any case, it's important for parents to achieve that temperance be imprinted in the heart not as prohibition, but as conscious conviction that what's harmful is harmful, and what's good should have reasonable measure.

That satiation doesn't bring with itself joy of life and not everything that the world offers is beneficial for soul and body.

It's also worth remembering that the Holy Spirit works together with us, Who knows how to establish the child in truth and when to remind him of what he heard from his instructors.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Gen.2:16-17; 3:6-8; 39:7-9; Dan.1:12-16; Matt.4:1-11; 2Pet.1:5-6; Prov.3:1-2; 10:19; 16:32; 23:20-21; 31:4-5; Eccl.10:16-17 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. Why is it necessary to cultivate temperance in children?
5. Why is temperance a fruit of the Holy Spirit?
6. Why don't strict prohibitions always help cultivate temperance in a child?

7. How does the personal example of parents influence the cultivation of temperance in children?
8. Why is it important to give children logical and scientific explanations of the harm of intemperance?
9. Why is it important to prepare children for independent life in matters of temperance?
10. How did Jesus Christ overcome temptation in the wilderness and show an example of temperance?
11. Why is it important to teach children to limit themselves in food?
12. What games can help a child learn self-control and temperance?
13. How does the Holy Spirit help a child establish himself in temperance?
14. Why is it important for parents to cultivate temperance not only in actions, but also in children's thoughts?

Food Temperance Lessons

Teaching temperance relates to the most important and responsible discipline of home education. Someone said: "Read about the fruit of the Holy Spirit from Gal.5:22-23 from back to front and you will see that where there is no temperance, everything else will have a sad appearance." And one can agree with this. The fruit of the Spirit is unique in that all its qualities are present in a person simultaneously and don't act in isolation from others.

The earlier parents begin to cultivate temperance in children, the easier it is for them to achieve this and the less effort they will have to apply in the future to correct existing vices. And if intemperance has become the norm of life and behavior, then correcting is always more difficult than creating something new.

A person who has tasted sin and lives according to the flesh is more inclined to repeat this action than one who has never encountered this. But for both, strength from above is needed to resist this evil and emerge victorious on the level of consciousness.

It's difficult to control a child's behavior and understand what he is taught if he grows and develops most of the time outside the family, in nurseries, in kindergarten, in boarding school, in school or in camp. And if these institutions are secular, then the loss of parental control over the child's upbringing for God is inevitable.

Temperance lessons begin with nutrition. As a rule, at the beginning of their lives, infants don't know and don't accept anything except mother's milk and somewhere in their minds a feeding schedule is developed, which they will never miss and won't tolerate delays. But the older the child becomes, the less often he needs to nurse, and then he has to completely give up this natural food.

Usually from 6 months, mama, in addition to milk or milk formula, begins to give complementary food. It shouldn't be

done before 4 months, as the infant's digestive system is not yet developed. Though he will swallow everything, not everything will be beneficial.

Measure and time - this is what every mother should know. And this can change with the child's growth. Not all food pleases babies and they often refuse to take something inside. Here one should be extremely careful, as any replacement is immediately remembered by the child and he notes that if one refuses one thing, one can get something else. If the food was tasty and beneficial, then it shouldn't be replaced with something more exquisite, and the baby needs to be told that if he doesn't want to eat, then this is his choice and he will get nothing then.

If the mother gives the child a choice of what he wants, then it's important to determine the measure so that he doesn't overeat.

There should be no talk of any snacking. Taking food should be at a certain time and that's all. Between these events one can only drink water.

It's very important, when visiting church gatherings, to make sure that no candies from "kind" grandmothers get into the child's hands, as well as no food products from those mothers who think their child will die of hunger if he doesn't eat something during worship.

When preparing food at home, children are usually always somewhere nearby and, sensing familiar smells, may begin to whine for something for themselves. Mama needs to ask God for iron nerves and be fundamentally resistant to children's whining, firmly but with love explaining that everything has its time. It's difficult for a child to resist internal impulses of appetite and lusts, but mama's reasonable answer teaches him that in their home it's customary to abstain and he has to accept this. Any indulgence to childish whims in the area of appetite opens doors to intemperance and then correcting something built will be much more difficult.

Older children already begin to understand the essence of prohibitions and limitations and, when they receive logical

explanation to this or that limitation, it's easy for them to cope with their passions and control their appetite.

The example of temperance of Daniel and his companions in Babylon teaches what blessings control in food brings. One can together with children compile a table of harmful, dangerous and beneficial things. This manual will help them orient themselves correctly in choosing the best.

Mothers shouldn't fear if a willful child misses a meal of beneficial food in the struggle for his rights to receive what he wants. Let the inflexibility of parental principles in nutrition be clear and visible to him comprehensively and unshakably.

To the question of the presence of sugar and sweets in your house on your table, one should approach much more seriously than it seems at first glance. This is the most powerful tool in the matter of intemperance in the hands of the enemy of the soul, with which he often destroys good eating habits and crosses out all the benefit of that good and proper food that managed to get into the stomach through tasting and thanksgiving. Even when a person has eaten and feels full, it's often very difficult for him to refuse sweet pie, exquisite cake or a piece of chocolate that is offered to him for dessert immediately after eating or after a short pause, together with tea or sweet drinks.

The stomach doesn't have a window to observe the fermentation that sugar and excess food causes, but any intemperance produces exactly this and forms dopamine dependence, which helps next time to wait with lust for repetition and accept the offered temptation with joy.

The momentary joy of a happy child who receives a portion of sweets isn't worth destroying the foundations of temperance for it and feeding one's child with what doesn't satisfy and brings no benefit.

Behind sugar and sweets stand more powerful dark forces of temptations than we imagine, and since this is familiar and pleasant to taste for us, it doesn't cause great concerns and is brought into the house as a "beneficial" food product.

As an alternative there are many natural fruits that contain natural sugars in natural form and with reasonable consumption bring invaluable benefit. May the Lord give wisdom to parents how to understand this question and not make distortions to one side or the other.

When you go to visit someone where they will feed you, or invite someone to your place for this purpose, then be sure to discuss who should bring what and how beneficial this will be for your children. It will be very ugly when everyone around will be consuming cakes and pastries, and you with your children will be reproaching their conscience with your temperance.

All questions of nutrition rules are very controversial when taken beyond your home world, therefore this shouldn't be made the main topic for conversation and if a conflict of opinions arises, then it's better not to prove your position, but do what protects you from evil and teaches temperance.

God has taken care to give much light in the area of temperance not only in nutrition, but also in other spheres of life. Through the Spirit of Prophecy we are given valuable recommendations in matters of food and drink and, following them, we will have success in this matter.

If a person's organism is healthy and works properly, not loading the nervous and digestive systems, then all other spiritual and mental processes proceed at the proper level and bring blessings. And a clear mind is much more valuable than exquisite or excessive food.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read 1Cor.6:13; 9:25; 10:31; Gal.5:22-23; Prov.23:1-2,20-21; 25:16,28; Rom.14:17; Phil.3:19; Ezek.16:49; Dan.1:12,15; Matt.4:4, in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. How does the absence of temperance affect the other fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)?

5. Why is correcting intemperance more difficult than cultivating temperance from childhood?
6. Why do temperance lessons begin with nutrition?
7. Why shouldn't beneficial food be replaced with more exquisite food at the child's desire?
8. Why are snacks between main meals harmful?
9. How should parents resist pressure from those around them giving children candies during gatherings?
10. How does the experience of Daniel and his friends in Babylon show the blessings of temperance in food?
11. Should one fear that a child will miss a meal due to capriciousness?
12. How do sugar and sweets destroy temperance skills?
13. What spiritual consequences can attachment to sweets have? 2Tim.3:4.
14. Why shouldn't one impose their position on nutrition on other people?

Other Temperance Lessons

Cultivating temperance is painstaking work of parents over many years. And even when children leave their father's house, the prayers of father and mother for them continue to have special influence and prompt heavenly forces to accomplish the work of salvation of their children.

Different children have different temperaments and react differently to all kinds of instructions. But while they are small, they learn everything that parents invest in them. The personal example of father and mother reinforces all kinds of instructions in children's hearts, and praise, approval and adequate assessment of observant parents establish young students in right things.

If a child has shown intemperance in something and behaved contrary to expectations and instructions of parents, then wise father and mother will help him correct this mistake and try to explain how and what needs to be done to worthily endure the next test.

When parents pray that the Lord would reveal to them the sins and vices of their children, they receive special intuition and can feel what is happening in the lives of their household members contrary to God's will.

Girls should be instructed in modesty of behavior and decency in clothing, especially when there are boys nearby. Even very small children quickly understand that intimate body parts covered by clothing cannot be shown to anyone, especially to representatives of the opposite sex. And this rule should become fundamental, and if someone asks them to show something, it's necessary to give a firm refusal and then inform their parents.

Older children, as a rule, willingly participate in caring for their younger siblings and, during changing clothes, see everything the infant possesses. Here father and mother need to show special wisdom to explain to the older child how girls differ

from boys and what clothing is needed so that it protects the body from foreign eyes.

Babies, as a rule, are not shy of each other and don't pay attention to how decent their clothing or its absence is. But parents should instill these rules in them through frequent instructions and personal example.

Temperance in words, like in food, relates to the most responsible skill that is formed not in one day. When father and mother have pure lips and pure hearts, they naturally pass this property of soul to their children. The child quickly remembers everything he hears at home, on the street, in the company of other children and he tries to apply all these expressions and words in his life. His consciousness seeks logical connections between conversation and feelings, between words and meaning. When parents hear rude or foul expressions not accepted in their home, they should immediately react to this and give explanation that such speech is not acceptable in their family. When the young mind imprints the opinion about what is good in words and what is bad, it will be characteristic for him to choose the better.

Also important are temperance lessons in expressing negative feelings and thoughts. It's not difficult to trace the source of their appearance and through biblical instructions, instill in children how one can and should, with God's help, overcome any sin at its earliest stage.

It is written that "each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire; then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death." (James 1:14-15). And that "we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body." (James 3:2).

And also that "I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." (Matt 12:36-37).

Games with elements of temperance work very effectively. One can create a situation in which anger or indignation would be natural, but before this comes out, children should be given the opportunity to analyze their reaction and let them suggest two or more responses: sharp, natural and meek, and then, with your help, choose the better.

It's also worth inventing a game or situation where, before expressing something negative or giving a bold answer, one needs to make a delay in expressing one's feelings or not voice them at all.

In games children feel free and willingly play different roles, but their minds quickly absorb the correct position and, with frequent playing out of familiar scenarios, quickly remember the covered material and make it their habit.

Daily schedule, alternating by time study, games and entertainment, getting up and going to bed, and strict adherence to this order, teaches the child temperance in excessive activity in this or that sphere of his activities and accustoms the young student to discipline.

Also important are temperance lessons in getting something immediately, here and now. One can establish terms or conditions for getting something. One can arrange games in which children learn to wait their turn. One can test their patience through promising to receive something greater, but later, than something small, but now. It's important that children themselves make the decision to choose the better and games should be organized precisely so that what will teach them temperance is chosen.

The ability to say "no" to what is really dangerous or destructive can also be instilled in games and quizzes. Good support in this type can be other children who are taught to refuse what's bad and with their influence can teach younger siblings too.

Temperance from unnecessary purchases and spending money on pleasures will teach the child to collect large sums and acquire needed things. But at the same time one should give

lessons of generosity too, so that your children learn to give and give everything at once, if there is urgent need.

Having a family budget, it's necessary to show and explain to children what is important and urgent, where one can save, and where it's better to keep money to oneself. Trips to toy stores open doors to unnecessary temptations, but if this cannot be avoided, then one can learn the child's desires and lead him with many wise questions to the point where he himself decides that he doesn't need so much.

Sometimes it's worth allowing the child to decide and buy what he desires himself, even if you consider this unnecessary. Perhaps his world of values will differ from yours. But support and understanding from your side will never be excessive.

Temperance from laziness and idleness, though it may seem inappropriate in the active life of a child, but one should watch that his activity doesn't turn into ignoring direct duties and fulfilling assigned tasks.

Gadgets, and their free use by children, in this case, won't be able to support parents, but will form unnecessary problems in children.

Temperance from using electronic media in your home should be made a rule and while explaining that communication with living people is always a priority for you.

In a game about being busy with a phone one can show by personal example how this device can separate friends and destroy communication. Let them experience your ignoring their requests to play with them, and then explain that others will feel the same when your child is busy with his phone.

Games teach much and at the same time don't spoil relationships and don't create tragedy.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Phil.4:8; Eph.4:29; Prov.10:19; 14:29; 25:28; 31:26; Rom.12:2; 1Tim.2:9; Deut.6:6-7; Titus.2:7 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?

3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What other temperance lessons do you know?
5. What else does the Bible say about control over words?
6. How to teach a child to abstain from negative thoughts and emotions?
7. How to teach a child to control anger and irritation?
8. Why do different children react differently to instructions?
9. Why do praise and approval help children establish themselves in right things?
10. How should parents react to rude or foul words heard from a child?
11. How do games help children learn to control their emotions and speech?
12. Why shouldn't parents buy children everything they want?
13. Why is it important to limit a child's screen time?
14. How to explain to a child that communication with living people is more important than with gadgets?

Training Love

There are families where two or more children were born, and each child is a separate planet that needs to be studied, raised and instructed in truth. Any mother of many children will tell you that each child from birth has their own character and features that belong only to them. And this prerogative to endow the embryo with special soul properties belongs to God. The only thing parents can contribute to the uniqueness of child's character and their gender is to pray for the future family member even before they are conceived and appear in the world, submitting to the fact that the final word remains with God. The Lord answers our requests as we desire, but sometimes He can give us what He desires, to test us and teach us what we wouldn't learn otherwise.

Twins or twins are a special blessing that doesn't fall to all parents. They differ much from children of different ages. In this case, the born babies are connected by special emotional bonds that are strong and firm until old age. But this is a separate topic.

In a classical family, the first child is the main and primary object of parents' love. And by their selfish nature, firstborns gladly accept care for themselves, having no direct competitors with whom their parents would share their love and joy. But the appearance of a second baby divides feelings and care between two children, and all firstborns immediately notice and feel this, and may react unpredictably to such situation. Parents don't know what happens in the heart and mind of the older child, but by their actions they can quickly determine how acceptable their behavior is toward the younger relative and how dangerous it can be.

The goal of raising two or more children is to teach them to love each other and love God with all their soul and all their understanding. It is written in 1 Tim. 1:5: "Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith." This verse concerns not

only adult followers of Christ, but also young family members who cannot yet distinguish good from evil.

To teach someone something, it's necessary first to understand oneself the importance of having this love between father and mother. Whether parents want it or not, their model of behavior and relationships with each other will influence both their relationships with children and children's relationships with each other.

But when I begin to teach others what I poorly understand myself, then I learn together with them. This is a law of learning that the Lord successfully implements in our life, sending us where we don't know and calling us to do what we don't understand.

Having made the decision together with my wife to teach our children to love each other, we see in this teaching process that we ourselves need this same love no less than our young family members, and in instructing others we instruct ourselves. How can one demand and expect from others what one doesn't have oneself? And one has to ask for strength from above and Heavenly gold purified by fire to enrich oneself and all members of one's family.

God commanded in Eph. 5:25 husbands to love their wives, and children without extra words will see this love of father for their mother. And the best instruction and example of love will be in the attitude of love of the family head toward the family queen.

We are born to love and be loved, and therefore such relationships and science of loving is easily accepted by the child and helps them resist their innate selfishness, choosing love for their brother or sister.

The older child has huge influence on their younger brethren, and therefore their upbringing and instilling good soul qualities in them subsequently produces its effect through them on all their younger relatives. They become natural instructor in those principles and laws they themselves are taught.

Personal example of parents will always be priority, but words calling children to love each other are also needed and important. When the older child begins to understand meaning and sense of words, it's necessary to tell them how to love their younger brother or sister, showing how you do this. One can stroke the baby, hug and kiss them, rock their cradle or behave quietly, teaching that this or similar behavior is also manifestation of love.

Many children are inclined to be jealous of their younger family members, seeing how parents pay more attention to these helpless creatures. Father and mother should explain that they love both those and others, and instill in jealous creatures that love for younger brother or sister is the best behavior that will greatly please parents.

Spouses need to control behavior of the older child, and if they notice their jealousy, watch that they don't remain alone with their younger relative for long. While the infant can't speak, they won't tell you how unfairly their older brother or sister treats them, but once committed sin is easier to repeat next time.

Don't be afraid to use electronic surveillance means to stop all evil in relationships between children. While the older child is not taught love, they may, without understanding it themselves, succumb to internal impulse from enemy of soul and do what wasn't in their plans.

The Lord watches what principles are instilled in children and participates in teaching love. This is His gift and His heritage, and He is no less interested than parents in forming heavenly character in the rising generation.

One should also remember the following: What parents sow in child's heart and in relationships between children, they will subsequently reap. God will grow good seed, and one shouldn't fear that your children will be good and trusting people, and everyone will take advantage of this. Love is given to be given to good and evil.

Love for each other is God's commandment that must be observed by oneself and instilled in one's children. This is that character trait without which everything else loses meaning. All those principles of love that were offered in relationships between adults are also relevant in relationships between children. And everything you want to see in your children, parents themselves need in their communication with each other and with the external world.

It's necessary to begin teaching the older child love for the younger before the second's appearance. If there's big age difference, then perhaps your older child has already decided to love their future relative and asks you for their appearance. Then this faith and love for one who doesn't exist yet must be strengthened, encouraged and supported.

The general rule for all parents sounds like this: teach your children to love each other, love unconditionally, wholeheartedly and at all times, and the Lord will bless your efforts.

As it's now pleasant for Deity to see our genuine and pure love for each other, so will it be joyful for parents to see and know that love reigns between their children. And instructed to love in youth, they will preserve this until old age.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read 1 John 3:14; 4:21; John 13:34; Col. 3:14,21; Eph. 5:25; 6:1; Ps. 127:3; 128:1; Prov. 4:23; 22:6; Matt. 18:20; 1 Pet. 4:8 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What is the main goal of raising two or more children?
5. Why is parents' behavior model in the family important?
6. What happens when we teach others what we poorly understand ourselves?
7. Why is the science of loving easily accepted by a child?
8. What influence does the older child have on younger ones?
9. Why is parents' personal example more important than words?

10. How to teach the older child to show love to the younger?

What methods can be used for this?

11. What is jealousy in children and why does it arise?

12. Why is it important to watch the older child's behavior alone with the younger?

13. Why shouldn't one fear raising children to be good and trusting?

14. When should one begin teaching the older child love for the younger?

Chapter 32. Teaching Love

Every human being was created to love and to be loved. This law is built into human nature, and it is precisely in such an environment that all the beautiful qualities of the soul and hidden talents, which are abundantly present in each of us, can be revealed and developed.

But every child is born without knowledge or wisdom and needs someone who will teach them good things and good manners, who will provide a good example to follow, and who will be their mentor and teacher during their early years. This responsibility is entrusted to parents, who are the primary shapers of their child's habits, tastes, interests, and knowledge, forming the character that will accompany that person throughout the rest of their life.

The purpose of upbringing in every large family is to teach children to love one another from a pure heart and a good conscience, while having sincere faith in Jesus. 1 Timothy 1:5.

The age difference between children can significantly simplify the teaching process or make it more interesting. Younger children naturally tend to obey older children and imitate them in many ways. However, being younger does not deprive them of their sense of dignity, and if they possess leadership qualities, they may very skillfully take the initiative and guide their more accommodating older siblings.

It is not difficult for parents to recognize the qualities of each child and guide their children according to their individual inclinations. Teaching love has its own individual characteristics and its own principles, which apply in every family and are understood by every member.

1. The personal example of parents in their love for each other and for their children is the best illustration for every child of the behavior expected of them. It is the father and mother who teach their children mutual love and, in doing so, demonstrate the love of the Heavenly Father to their young pupils, receiving wisdom from above to instruct them in righteousness.

Teach them that God is love, and that your love for your children is a manifestation of the Heavenly Father's love for them through you.

2. Respect for each child's feelings, opinions, and boundaries on the part of parents inspires respect in return and teaches children to demonstrate these same qualities toward one another. The self-restraint and attentiveness of parents, and their ability to listen calmly to each child, provide an example of how children should treat others.

3. A positive spirit, joyful communication, friendliness, kind words, and optimism—all these create a heavenly atmosphere in the family, where not only every family member but also the heavenly angels find it pleasant to be. These angels also actively participate in our happiness and help us raise citizens for the Kingdom of Heaven.

4. Spiritual instruction that loving one another is God's commandment, which must be obeyed, lays a firm foundation in every child's heart and helps them build their house of relationships with the surrounding world, a house that will withstand the storms and hardships that will soon come.

5. The absence of criticism, gossip, faultfinding, and disagreements. Such a spirit is contagious and very quickly destroys good relationships. Remove all external influences that may introduce this evil, and carefully watch what you and your children say, replacing negative expressions with those that build up love and friendship.

6. Children naturally quarrel and argue over all kinds of little things. They can often resolve these matters quickly on their own, but when a conflict escalates or shows signs of becoming worse, parents need to intervene and determine how everything can be brought to forgiveness, compromise, and an understanding of the other person's needs.

It is best to teach children to forgive one another before they quarrel, so that you can later remind them of these lessons. If someone is unable to make concessions immediately and continues behaving wildly, that child should be isolated in a

separate room, explaining that your family welcomes relationships based on friendliness and forgiveness, while those who violate these principles will live in isolation and loneliness.

Try to find a solution to every conflict between children without punishing those responsible. Clearly explain what each offender has done wrong and, if possible, work together to find a way out of the situation.

7. Reading and discussing stories about love and friendship teaches children to demonstrate the same spirit in their own relationships. It is important for each child to express what they have understood and what principles have become clear to them. At the same time, parents should skillfully guide their children's thinking in the right direction.

8. Encouraging acts of kindness and love is a powerful motivation for every family member. When a mother joyfully tells the father, who has returned home from work, how many good things his children have done, such a testimony inspires young minds to further deeds of love and encourages children's hearts to diligently repeat good actions.

9. Family traditions, such as preparing for an upcoming birthday, should involve every family member. Parents should raise the question of how each person in the family can best demonstrate their love and do something for the happiness of the person in whose honor the celebration is being held.

You can also establish your own special dates for celebrations of love, during which all the children can share their experiences of how to love one another better.

10. Encourage children to talk about love, reflect on it, take turns teaching it to others, and explain its principles. Learn Bible verses about loving one another together with them, and ask them to give others instruction based on these verses.

11. Create situations in which children can help and support one another. Let every child experience both the role of someone who gives help and the role of someone who receives it.

12. Teach children to rejoice in the successes and victories of others, so that in games and various activities they see one another not as rivals or competitors, but as allies or mentors. Teach them to congratulate wholeheartedly and rejoice for the person who has defeated them in a game or given better answers.

13. Teach children to share with one another everything that brings them joy, everything they find delicious, and everything they value. Develop and encourage in them a spirit of self-sacrifice and concern for the needs of others, forgetting about themselves. Do not scold children for excessive generosity, even if, in a moment of greatheartedness, they begin giving away your belongings. You can calmly retrieve those things without unnecessary emotion if they were given to people you know. However, children should also be taught wisdom and good judgment in giving.

Let children always remember that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Acts 20:35.

14. Impress upon children that they are one family, that the family is an institution established by God, and that a united family is a special strength and influence in the world. Let them understand that they are members of this union and that it must be unbreakable and strong, with each member called to contribute in their own way to the common happiness and well-being, and to provide support during trials or misfortune. Instill in them love for the family as a single whole.

15. Teach children to pray for one another, for the personal needs of others, and for their success and prosperity, and then rejoice together over the answers received. Encourage children to pray privately for their brothers and sisters in their personal communion with God. Also let them understand that you always pray for them when they are away from home and beyond your sight.

16. Call upon God's power every day to raise your children in love for one another. Buy from the Faithful Witness in Revelation 3:18 gold refined in the fire, so that you yourselves

may become rich and may also enrich your children with it. Clothe yourselves in the white garments of Christ's character and obtain the eye salve of heavenly wisdom, so that you can then share all these things with your children.

17. Teach children always to choose love in difficult situations and to ask for it from above when they have no desire to love at all. Practice with them how these prayers to God should sound, repeating these exercises again and again, even when everything is going well. And during a quarrel or conflict, remind them what they should do when they find themselves in such a situation.

18. Teach children not to be afraid to love, and tell them how Jesus loved His disciples, how people responded to His love, and what they did to Him because He loved the whole world. Explain that this is the only way to overcome every evil in their lives, and that love is a weapon of victory.

19. Help children understand that love for one another also extends to relationships between parents and children. Make a covenant with them to love one another no matter what. Constantly remind them of your love and ask them to tell you how they feel about you as well.

20. When teaching love for one another, explain that this is a two-way commandment and that love between brothers and sisters must be mutual and sincere. Teach them to tell one another about their love, about their experiences within that love, about what they feel and what they think when they love one another. If you have three or more children, let their mutual love include every one of them, so that no one in your family is left without love.

21. Practice together with your children identifying good qualities of character and behavior in one another and in new people they meet. Teach them to be attentive in this matter and to notice the beautiful qualities that every person possesses. And once they have learned this, continually help them practice the ability to see what is beautiful in people and to express it in words.

22. Organize competitions in which family members exchange kind words and compliments, so that children continually enrich their vocabulary with such expressions and are not embarrassed to share them with people outside the family.

23. Teach children to be friendly in every social setting and not to be ashamed of loving one another, even when other children begin to ridicule them for it. Let their love for one another be known to everyone, and there is no reason to hide it or be afraid of it. Explain that outside your home many people do not know how to love and do not understand what love is. Therefore, they will often be surprised by and attack those who possess this love.

Before your children encounter such opposition in the world, act out similar situations with them at home and teach them how to behave, what they should say in response, and when it is necessary simply to remain silent and quietly pray for God's help and protection.

24. When you see that your children have learned to love one another, teach them to include their friends from the world in this love and to teach those friends to love one another, demonstrating how it works in their own family. Let every young guest in your home personally experience the heavenly atmosphere that reigns in your relationships. Love your children's friends and tell them so. Let your home become a place where they, too, can encounter Christ through you and experience the touch of His love that has passed through your heart.

25. Believe that all things are possible to the one who believes. Even if nothing seems to work at first, do not give up, but continue sowing love. This ability must pass through fiery trials together with you so that it may stand before Heaven in its pure form. Do not worry if everything does not immediately work out as well as described in these lessons. Every good seed needs time and constant care to germinate and produce an abundant harvest.

26. Discuss family matters with your children, including plans for the future, who can take responsibility for different duties, and the best way to act in various situations. Let children feel and see themselves as full members of the family, whose opinions matter to everyone and where each person can share with others whatever they consider important.

27. Teach that your mutual friendship and the children's love for one another are forever, and that this love should remain constant and unchanging.

28. If you live together with your parents, they too should become recipients of your love and the love of your children. Indeed, all your other relatives should also receive the blessings of God's love and friendship that you share.

29. If several generations happen to live under one roof, remember that you are responsible only for yourselves and your young children, whom the Lord requires you to teach good habits until they become self-sufficient and independent.

All foster or adopted children also come under the authority of their parents until a certain age, and spouses must raise these children with the same responsibility as they raise their own.

30. Teach children to understand the feelings and emotions of another person. Ask them to imagine themselves in the place of an offended or sad child, and ask how they should act in that situation. Explain the pain that others may experience when someone begins to hit or mistreat them.

31. Respect the personal space and individual choices of every child. Children must also be taught this respect. Each of them should have something that belongs only to them, which no one may enter or access without their permission, whether it is a private room, a place in a wardrobe, or a treasure box. However, this personal place or space must always be kept tidy and must not interfere with the lives of others.

Likewise, every child may have their own personal emotional space, which should not be entered without their permission.

32. Memories of past years, family photo albums or video recordings, and discussions of past experiences, victories, and failures help children appreciate their present relationships and unite the family with closer bonds of love. Remembering the good things of the past strengthens emotional connections and helps them experience similar goodness in the future.

33. Teach children to write letters of love to you and to one another, and do not be sparing in writing letters expressing your own love for your children. Let them learn to express their feelings not only in words spoken aloud, but also on paper. Remember that many years later, these words of love will have the same influence that was placed in them when they were written, and they will continue to demonstrate the same power that was invested in them. For words of love are God's words, which accomplish the purpose for which they are sent. The Bible and everything written in it confirm this truth.

Preserve your love for your children in writing, and believe that the depth of these words will become even more understandable to your children many, many years later.

34. Organize evenings of thanksgiving, when everyone can express their gratitude to everyone else for all that has been experienced during the past few days. Reflect together on what has happened, and do not forget to thank God for everything as well. Let this become a family tradition. Parents should decide how often these gatherings are held.

Questions for Reflection on This Chapter

1. Please read 1 John 3:18; 4:18; Ephesians 4:32; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 13:13; Hebrews 12:12; Colossians 3:12-15; 2 Corinthians 13:11; James 1:17; 2 John 1:6; Romans 13:10 in light of this chapter.
2. What other Bible verses have come to your mind?
3. What have you understood from this chapter?
4. What other methods of teaching love do you know?
5. How can the age difference between children influence the process of teaching love?

6. What influence does parents' respect for their children's feelings and opinions have?
7. What elements create a "heavenly atmosphere" in the family?
8. Why is spiritual instruction about loving one another as God's commandment important?
9. What else needs to be removed from the family atmosphere in order to preserve good relationships?
10. How should parents act when children quarrel?
11. Why is it important to read and discuss stories about love and friendship with children?
12. What role does encouraging acts of love play in the family?
13. How do family traditions help develop love among family members?
14. Why is it important to encourage children to speak about love and reflect on it?

How to Teach Goodness?

When parents send their children to educational institutions, they have confidence that children will come out educated and literate. And the fact that the child doesn't know anything yet is not a problem for teachers. The educator is appointed precisely to teach children those sciences and give them knowledge that will strengthen in consciousness and bring benefit throughout life.

How does knowledge reinforcement occur? The child is introduced to a new task, laws and rules are explained to them sequentially, and then they are given assignment and offered to show or share what they understood. And if there are mistakes, then the teacher corrects them and explains how to solve the task correctly. Then assignment is given again, and checking occurs again. No matter how much children want to engage in something else, the teacher insists that they engage in what's needed and keep pace with the learning program. And new tasks in the learning program become more and more complex.

Children don't have knowledge of good as the Bible and Christian ethics teach this. And parents become the first and most important teachers of their sons and daughters. The same school principles work in the spiritual world too. Any evil is sin, and good is ability to live, think, feel and act according to God's will.

A child very well absorbs what they are purposefully taught and what they constantly practice. Teaching something to a "life beginner" is much easier than retraining and re-educating an established personality. Understanding of good and bad comes to children from what they see and hear.

Let's give an example with domestic animals. No matter how well these speechless creatures behave, sometime the baby will want to cause pain to their pets or create havoc in their animal world. This desire arises not because of innate carnal nature, but because the child doesn't understand what animals feel, how they suffer and get scared. They're simply interested to run

after them with a stick and watch how they "merrily" scatter and hide. In this situation it's necessary not only to forbid them to arrange such entertainment, but also explain what animals feel, how painful it is for them, and how much they suffer afterward. One can let the baby feel on their own body what pain a stick blow or kick brings. And explanation of how to love their younger creature-brethren teaches the child to show opposite behavior that's pleasant to all living and rational beings.

Take your little animal in your hands and show how they need to be stroked, how to behave in their presence, what kind words to say to them. Children very quickly learn good manners that are taught to them.

If a child doesn't want to put shoes in their proper place after a walk, then it's necessary to make them put boots on again, take them outside the door, and then show by your own example how it's necessary first to wipe boots on the mat before the door, then neatly enter the house, take off shoes and put them in the specific place where they should always stand. If the child is not in the mood, then one shouldn't be frightened by this, but calmly show again and again on your own boots, and then ask them to do the same. It's hard to imagine what will happen in the first lesson, but the baby must understand that free entry into the house lies through putting boots in their place, properly hanging outerwear and putting headwear in its proper place. Let this be a rule for all members of your family. One way or another, the child will absorb this lesson, and over time will so reinforce it that they will do this until old age.

In such simple examples an important principle is revealed that shows that in your house an irreconcilable struggle will be waged with all evil, and it's better for children to submit and be happy.

And even when the lesson is absorbed and after many years you see shoes in the wrong place, it's necessary to pay attention to this and ask to restore order. Father and mother shouldn't be exceptions to this rule.

There will be very many house rules, and if you write them down for yourself and sometimes reread them for everyone, they will be alive and effective in your house.

If children quarrel and this leads them to fighting, then it's best to separate all conflict participants to rooms or corners and leave them there alone for some time. Children should understand that such spirit is inadmissible in your house and deprives them of pleasant communication and society. And if they miss tasty meal because of punishment, then don't give them anything at improper time. Let them learn that with good people everything happens on schedule and with love.

These examples are given as principle that should work with every violation and be reinforced at the end with gentle instruction and common prayer.

Bad grades in school are not evil, so one should never scold your schoolchild for them. It's best to find out the reason for such assessment and seek acceptable way out of this situation. Instill in children that any problems shouldn't upset them, since they are called to honor of highest calling in Jesus. But problems need to be solved, and each requires special approach.

Ask your child how they want to enter Eternity. As victor, in bright clothing, clothed with wisdom from above, with weapon of righteousness in right and left hand? Or as brand plucked from fire, somehow saved by God's grace and barely alive, jumping into the last car? Listen to their correct answer, and let this be constant reminder to them: "Lenochka, you're future good mom! And moms don't get offended at others, but love them!"

"Arsenchik, you're a victor! And with victors, fists and bad words don't win, but forgiveness and faithfulness in love and friendship!"

"Svetochka, God's daughter will never allow herself to wear such indecent clothing unworthy of her royal dignity!"

It's understandable and pleasant for children to hear who you see them as in the future, and when the goal is clear, then it's easier to go toward it and simpler to achieve it. Moreover, you don't flatter with these words, but speak truth behind which stands God and there is shed blood of our Savior.

The principle of overcoming evil with good should be present both in parents' voice and in the approach they will use.

Repetition is the mother of learning. Don't be afraid to repeat your instructions and check absorbed lessons of good and good behavior. Sometimes instead of forbidding and punishing something, it's better to find alternative and distract child's attention from evil deeds, and then in favorable environment remind of what happened and discuss harm of bad activities.

For each case and action, understanding is needed whether now is appropriate time for conversations and disciplinary measures. Somewhere it's important to react instantly, and something should be postponed when children calm down and are ready to listen to you.

When child's heart opens for trusting conversations, then there should be no reproaches, but desire to help and improve something in life and character of future victor.

Good behavior and love for order doesn't save from death, but it lays foundation for obedience to God's principles and discipline, and this is already important and serious.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Deut. 11:18-20; Prov. 1:8; 6:3; 22:15; 24:3; 26:6; Ps. 1:1-3; 78:3-8; 141:4; Rom. 12:21 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What are lessons of good and should you teach this to your children?
5. How can parents themselves learn to distinguish good from evil to teach this to their children?
6. Should parents insist on completing set tasks for good lessons even if children want to engage in something else?

7. Why is re-education more difficult than teaching someone who doesn't know anything yet?
8. Do you think a child will learn to distinguish good from evil if you begin teaching them this?
9. Why is it important that rules of good behavior are observed by all family members, including parents?
10. Do you always need to write down all your rules and laws on paper?
11. How should lessons of good and discipline be concluded?
12. Should you tell children who you see them as in the future and what perspective suits them better?
13. How to determine appropriate time for conversations and disciplinary measures?
14. Why are good behavior and love for order important, although they don't save from death?

Children's Love Languages

When a child appears in the world, they don't know anything yet. Their consciousness and mind are pure. Their will is not yet formed. They can't say anything yet, but already begin to accept what comes from their parents. And father and mother's task includes natural obligation to teach their child their native language and place in the baby's heart basic behavioral features in their home, making the child a worthy member of society.

I know one family that lives in Germany. Mom and grandmother are from Russia, father is from Italy, children attend German school and study in it, besides German, additionally French and English. They can freely communicate in five languages and don't confuse them among themselves.

Wise people discovered that each person, besides conversational speech, also has language of their heart and feelings, based on which it's very pleasant for them to build relationships and which is closest to them. This feature is called children's love languages. A child doesn't choose their native language, but naturally learns what they hear and see.

Christian psychologists identified 5 main love languages that are understandable to all people and which are heart language of each person. These are communication, gifts, touch, help and time spent in this person's company.

A baby doesn't know how to love and express their attachment to parents in one language or another. But they learn this from their parents. And that love language that brings them most pleasure becomes most understandable and desired for them.

Parents should understand this science and feature of children's perception. Father and mother should constantly prove their love to their small child through communication in all love languages. The very first expression of parental love is touch, communication and time. And then in the upbringing process gifts and help are included.

Think about what your love language is and why you most like to express your love in this language and receive it from others? And the answer can be found in your childhood, when such perception of parental love was subconsciously formed that you most wanted to experience.

Child's love language is their heart language. If someone begins to confess love to me in a language unknown to me, then despite all this person's effort and all their openness, my heart won't understand anything, although by behavior and facial expressions of loving friend I can determine that they're trying to convey something very important and useful to me and put all their soul, feelings and heart into this. But when I hear familiar native speech, I can perceive both meaning and that depth that's placed in my native language. And then this expression of love becomes most beautiful music for me that I could listen to always.

There's also reverse, negative side of love languages that's worth knowing and considering. If someone begins to use love language to cause pain and humiliate with it, then the heart perceives this many times stronger and reacts more sensitively than if this were in other languages. Although our psyche over time forms certain barriers and protection from unfamiliar people, the heart always wants to open to a dear person and communicate with them from heart to heart. And when dear soul takes knife in hands and thrusts it thoughtlessly into open heart, then this is very painful, and you don't know what to do with this, and go for comfort to God, who, understanding your love language, begins to gently heal your wounds.

When you've determined your child's love language and can prove your love to them in this language, then set your heart not to use this language for thoughtless spontaneous punishment. For example, if your son most loves your touches and hugs, and then receives slaps and cuffs with these same hands, then this will very strongly traumatize his children's psyche and cause heavy experiences in his heart because of such injustice. And scars from such negativity on your part can bleed for very long time and remind of themselves.

If parents know about love languages and understand in what language it's best for them to communicate with each other, then they will naturally express their love for child in their heart's native language. And the child will learn this language and will successfully master it, and sometime will want to communicate with their parents and brethren in it. But wise parents can teach their child all love languages and make them polyglot in this respect so much that it will be pleasant for child to give and receive love in any dialect and accent. Although over time one of these languages will still begin to dominate in their heart, other languages will also delight your child, and they will gladly communicate in them.

Each love language has its rules, its grammar, its certain laws that parents need to know and study before they begin to teach it. It will be very difficult for me to teach someone what I myself don't understand. And if you simply learn couple greeting words and consider them sufficient to touch soul strings and tease consciousness, then this is very little, and you will be polite foreigner to your child.

It's very important to know and master your children's love language because heart language is that narrow path to soul through which Holy Spirit can use your spiritual knowledge to convey God's love to child's heart clearly, through your heart.

Mass of useful instructions and stories about God's love may be incomprehensible to young mind if all this isn't supported by your behavior in their heart language. It's difficult for baby to understand God's love if they don't see it in relationships with their parents. But native manifestation of parental love will be able to immediately convey to young consciousness that depth of God's love and care that will naturally gladden children's heart.

If parents know about existence of these love languages and from childhood practice communication in each of them, then it will be very interesting for child to see and receive love in any form.

But if you only today learned that foreigner lives in your house who simply doesn't understand you or is closed from you, then it's worth making effort and understanding in what heart language you can have heart-to-heart talk with your child.

Your children won't live with you forever. Sometime they will leave parental nest and begin building their life far from you. And if they remain foreigners to you whose language you don't want to understand and study, then they're unlikely to be drawn to you for soulful communication, except perhaps from sense of duty, since they need to honor you somehow.

If your parents are still alive and you have relationships with them, but not as close as you'd like, then try to understand in what love language it's pleasant for them to build close relationships and what's valuable to them. Dedicate time and learn their love language, and communicate with them in it. After all, perhaps they will never study this topic and won't strain their efforts to understand your heart language and even begin learning it. As people say: "If the mountain won't come to Mohammed, then Mohammed will go to the mountain." And this rule concerns all your neighbors.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Mark 16:17; 1 Cor. 13:1; 14:18; Song 4:11; Gen. 11:7; Ps. 19:3-4; 139:4; Prov. 10:20; 18:21; Isa. 28:11; Matt. 15:8; 1 John 3:18 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What is children's love language?
5. Why can't a child choose their own love language?
6. Why is it important to understand child's love language?
7. What happens if someone expresses love in unfamiliar language?
8. What is the danger of using love language to cause pain?
9. Why is it important to support instructions about God's love with your behavior?
10. What happens if parents don't study their child's heart language?

11. How can relationships with already grown children be improved?
12. Why does the heart want to open to spiritually kindred person?
13. Why does heart language perceive pain stronger than other languages?
14. Do you know what your love language is? If not, how can this be determined?

Unconditional Parental Love

Unconditional love, or as it's also called "agape," is God's gift and that unique feature that can be born and develop in every heart wanting to have this love. Without understanding God's character and how His love works in us, any kind of love will be conditional, limited by human understanding, defiled by our sinful nature. And even if our imperfect love suits us, Heaven cannot accept it as something pure and right. But the Lord set before Himself the task to teach us to love each other, commanded us this and advised us to acquire this in the message to Laodicea as gold purified by fire, so that we might be enriched.

Any unconditional love takes its beginning from God's source of life and has in itself God's wisdom and His righteousness.

Unconditional parental love is also God's gift and decision of father and mother to love each other no matter what, and love their child regardless of who they are, what they do, what successes and achievements they've reached, how they behave, whether they love them back, what shortcomings they have. Love accepts all this, covers, forgives, doesn't notice, endures everything and continues to love no matter what. A child who is loved with unconditional love feels this, sees how agape manifests in parents' life, and understands that they are loved not for something, but because they simply exist, and they don't need to earn this.

Child's perception and young age don't imply that they should respond with love to love. Children live by feelings and emotions. They're not taught what parents can do, although sometimes they're capable of touching adults with their purity and sincerity, and it's hard to resist expressing tender feelings toward this God's gift.

To expect unconditional love from a small child is as foolish as expecting them to begin walking, talking, reading and writing before the time appointed by nature. Teaching a child to love is parents' task, for accomplishing which they will need more than

one year. But with their personal example and constant demonstration of this Divine soul quality they can place foundations of this principle in children's heart and lead the child to begin doing the same, responding the same and thinking about the same.

Unconditional parental love protects their children from many evils that want to burst into each of our lives. It teaches children trust, obedience, perseverance, honesty. It drives out fear and makes them victors in all their life questions.

But this needs to be taught.

Parental love raises children's self-esteem, gives child confidence in their abilities, makes them brave in many endeavors, keeps soul from evil, teaches them to forgive and share.

In my life this happens like this.

I love my child regardless of my mood, thoughts and feelings, world and political events. I love them always, even if they don't deserve it or behave exactly opposite. I love my daughter even when she rebels and openly hates me, when she's not in mood or when she doesn't want to communicate with me. I love this child when they're near and when I'm very far from home. I love them even if they make mistakes or lose in many situations, when nothing works out for them, or they bring bad grades. I love in any weather. I love not for good behavior and flawless obedience, but because I decided so, chose so, and because I'm grateful to God for such wonderful gift for whole life—to have daughter and raise her, placing in young consciousness the best that can only be imagined.

Children are the most sensitive and perceptive beings on the planet. They unmistakably determine father and mother's mood. They feel any falsehood and won't accept what you want to play, not being such in life. Although they can't express many of their thoughts in scientific language, you can't deceive them.

Don't be afraid to show love where you don't want to. Children, seeing that despite everything you still decide to love them, will respect you for this.

Children greatly value justice, and when parents forgive them from love for them, they realize this. They understand they deserved punishment, but thanks to your love they experience influence of undeserved mercy.

If a child isn't fed, they will die. If they're not given love, they also won't see meaning of life. Love is just as necessary nourishment for soul as physical food. Child's spirit thirsts for this parental tenderness and is satisfied by it when receiving what's due. You can't feed infant once and consider this sufficient. They need constant new portion. The Lord, knowing our ignorance in matters of spiritual nutrition, placed milk in mother's breast so she would take her child in arms every time and press them to herself, feeding young soul also with her love and tenderness.

The phase of parental service to children lasts until five-six years. During this time it's difficult to determine child's heart language, since they're open to perceiving all love languages and accept parental manifestation of unconditional love in any form. They can't love the same way adults do, and sometimes their feelings or internal emotions make them behave unpredictably. Parents shouldn't worry about this. Love taught them to endure many events and accept everything in right spirit.

As a rule, all parents love their children and are ready for any sacrifices and actions for them. But not all parental love is unconditional. Not all parental love is perceived by children as love, appreciating those deprivations their fathers and mothers experience. If mother thinks she expresses her love for children by standing from morning till evening at the stove, then her offspring are unlikely to appreciate this properly.

If father thinks his love for family is expressed by earning money from morning till evening so all family members live in good conditions and have everything, then he will be very

surprised that children don't accept such love and don't value such care for them. Children need their parents to constantly demonstrate and prove their love for them in love language understandable to their heart and in other languages too.

If father, coming from work, tells his children he loves them, and then goes to watch TV or read newspaper and asks not to disturb him to rest and restore his strength this way, then his words of love will bring little benefit to children.

Children are social beings, and they need such mentors who will be available to them at any time and for any questions. The most important teacher and representative of God's love is their mom, who usually spends more time in communication with babies and lays in their hearts foundation for all further children's construction.

Unconditional love teaches parents to give themselves completely and fully at the right time in right amount. It's wise and universal in its influence and knows how to do and prove what's expected from it. If it exists, then it will manifest itself everywhere and to everyone.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Jer. 31:3; Isa. 49:15; 1 John 3:1; Rev. 3:18-19; Prov. 10:12; 1 Pet. 4:8; Luke 11:11-13; James 1:19; Deut. 6:6-7; Matt. 18:3; Col. 3:21; Eph. 6:4 in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What is unconditional parental love? How does it express itself?
5. How to determine whether I have unconditional love for my children or it's conditioned by something?
6. Why is unconditional parental love important for child's development?
7. Why can't one expect unconditional love in response from small child?
8. What qualities develop in child thanks to unconditional parental love?
9. Why is parental love compared to nourishment for soul?

10. Why is it insufficient to simply tell child about love?
11. What role does emotional closeness play in unconditional love?
12. Why don't children always accept parental care as love?
13. How to learn to love child unconditionally if there wasn't such love in one's own childhood?
14. How to recognize that child feels parental love?

Love Through Communication

The gift of speech distinguishes humans from all other living beings. Although all representatives of the animal world can make various sounds and through this send warning signals to their kind, all of this lacks reason and logic. It is precisely human speech, its logic and consistency that testifies to the fact that you are dealing with a highly organized intelligent personality who can express their views, thoughts and feelings in a language understandable to you.

During the first year of life, children cannot speak, but they are very receptive and observant. If your words of love are not supported by your actions and emotions, then they remain for them a sound without meaning, which they will not be able to attach in their imagination to any object or action. But when the mother smiles at these words or tenderly takes the baby in her arms and presses him to herself, then the child develops an association of words of love with something pleasant and kind. The phrase "I love you, son," not supported by action, will sound to the child like a set of meaningless words.

That child who has tasted the delights of maternal tenderness and father's care, supported by appropriate words, will perceive the language of communication as something on which parents can express their love, which his young heart so needs.

Words of praise, encouragement, inspiration, comfort and support will be perceived by the young mind as the bread of life, and he will joyfully partake of this food and learn to share this language of love with those who surround him.

If the language of communication and praise is not your heart language, but your child understands this language best, then he will be a foreigner to you, but the most interesting thing is that you are also considered a foreigner to him, whose language he does not understand. And it is the task of wise parents to determine their child's heart language and learn to express their love to the young generation precisely in it. Children should not learn the parents' heart language, but the

father and mother should learn to express their love in a language of love understandable to their child.

If your daughter best perceives parental love through the language of encouragement and praise, but the parents buy her toys, take her to the zoo or amusement parks, hug her at all times, help her with her childish tasks, then she will starve and wither in the environment of such parental attention. And, as often happens, parents will be outraged by such ungrateful attitude of their daughter in her heart language, which will further aggravate her thirst and lead her heart to greater despondency. And if the father and mother do not understand that they are simply foreigners to their daughter, then they are unlikely to change anything in their expression of love and will wait for their daughter to become smarter and see how and with what love they care for her. But the girl needs only a few kind words of approval and admiration to breathe enthusiasm into her and encourage her for further life struggle.

Shouting, swearing, insults, nagging, reproaches and threats are unacceptable for any child, but if this young creature understands the language of communication as a path to the heart, then such actions by parents will be deadly for his soul. Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount that the violation of the commandment "Do not kill" also consists in uttering angry and insulting words (Matt. 5:21-22). But the world is not without good people, and such beaten children will seek those who can give them their love in their native language. It is written in Prov. 18:21: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits."

If parents have determined that their child is a foreigner and his heart language is words of encouragement, then they should learn this language and express their love precisely in it, even if it is incomprehensible to you how these words can gladden the heart. This should not be flattery or deception. You should not praise a child for nothing. Children are very attentive and smart. If they behave badly, and you scold them today and then suddenly praise them, they become confused by such inconsistency. If you speak words of encouragement very much

or often, then the child will also not perceive them properly. Words of praise and support should be appropriate for the time and event in which your children find themselves.

Flattery, although it may be pleasant to the ears, is not perceived by the heart as a language of love, because love befriends truth, and it is precisely in this combination of mercy and justice that it produces and exerts proper influence on human mind and feelings.

It is worth noting that father and mother should know both their personal love languages and each other's heart languages and be able to express their tender feelings precisely in them. It happens that adults learn their heart language only when they study such lessons.

We are all different, and even the same heart language is perceived by each of us individually, according to place and time.

A child is that personality who, besides upbringing and feeding, needs to be studied, to discover deep talents in him, to uncover imperishable treasures of the soul and to teach that he is unique.

If you do not know how to master this language of love, but you understand that your child understands it perfectly, then make an effort and begin to learn and practice the acquired knowledge. It is not your son or daughter who should study your love language, but you theirs. The method of learning is as simple as in learning any language. Listen, write in your notebook and pronounce.

By the shine of children's eyes, by his joy, by his behavior and desire to hear more words of encouragement, you will immediately understand that your efforts have reached their goal.

If there is a dried and withered flower in your house, how will you heal it? Wiping the leaves, good music, sunlight, food additives, room temperature, although needed by the plant, will not help in this situation. The plant needs water, and only it can

restore life to it. So also your children need water of life for their hearts, and parents should determine what kind of water it should be.

Food for the heart should be not only useful, but also tasty. In any language there are such words that can be spoken only to the closest and dearest people on special occasions. Arrange a festival of the soul for your children, choosing exactly what they like and brings the greatest joy. You can dryly praise a child for some achievement, or you can do it with special delight and surprise, describing the further prospects that open before him, or how he gladdens your heart with his actions. Children will never tire of listening to objective praise that they have earned.

But the child himself represents an amazing creation, in which there are very many unique features that he does not know, but with your help can learn. All children like gentle speech, calm voice of parents and respect for their dignity, no matter what heart language they speak. Therefore, parents need to know and master this language of love, which is understandable to all people, if you put your love and your kind feelings into it.

And kind language makes us kind.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Eph. 4:29; Prov. 3:2; 12:8; 15:4; 16:24; 19:11; 25:1; 31:26; James 1:19; Isa. 66:13; Col. 3:21; 1 Cor. 13:4-5; 1 Thess. 2:11-12, in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. How do you understand the expression of love through communication?
5. Why do words of love without emotional support remain a meaningless set of sounds for an infant?
6. Give an example of a situation when parental care may be perceived by a child as ineffective.
7. What does the phrase "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" mean?
8. Why is it important to know each other's personal love languages in the family?

9. Why are children sensitive to their parents' inconsistency?
10. Why is objective praise important for children, especially for those whose communication is their love language?
11. How can you recognize that your efforts to communicate with your child have reached their goal?
12. Why shouldn't you wait for your child to first learn your love language?
13. How can you learn to hear and understand your child's heart language?
14. How are gentle speech and a child's emotional development connected?

Love Through Touch

The very first language of love that all children understand is gentle touch. Our body is thoroughly permeated with nerve endings, which at any contact with the surrounding world give a signal to the brain, and a person feels what he touches.

The very first lessons of love a child receives from his mother, who gently demonstrates her care and joy to him. And the mother herself, taking the newborn baby in her arms, experiences indescribable delight from touching this tiny person, who is part of her and whom she carried under her heart for so long. And through this tender connection of two kindred souls, an invisible bond is formed that is preserved for all subsequent life. It is written in Isa. 49:15: "Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you."

Touch and gentle words are vitally important and necessary for newborn children. Without them, children die literally.

There is a legend about how the king of the Roman Empire, Frederick II, who lived in the 13th century, ordered to isolate 50 newborn children, not to talk to them and not to take them in arms, but only to feed and change them, in order to find out what language they would speak. This experiment quickly ended because all the children died very quickly.

In the 20th century, in confirmation of this, workers of Romanian orphanages, where abandoned children were placed, reported high mortality and developmental delays in these babies, because no one dealt with them and no one took them in their arms.

The language of touch is the strongest and most convincing way to express your love and prove it in deed without unnecessary words.

What do you feel when you begin to stroke yourself on the arms, on the head, on other parts of the body? Is it pleasant for

you to give yourself a massage? This does not bring you harm and pain, if there are no open wounds and inflammations. And if a person close to you does the same thing, showing special caution and tenderness, and at the same time saying kind words, then I think these will be interesting sensations. The language of touch is understandable to everyone, although not everyone has it as their native heart language.

But small children are born for hugs. And this is the simplest and most important food for their developing bodies. It is precisely through touch that the mother tells the child about love and with her gentle words fixes in the child's consciousness the connection of kind words, tender embraces and time in understanding the word "love." The father also contributes to teaching this language of love when he takes the child in his arms, changes him, kisses, strokes, leads by the hand and touches with reason and without any cause. And with age, this need for touch does not pass, but transforms.

You won't hold a teenage daughter on your knees anymore, and in front of peers she won't rejoice at your touches, but this is rather peculiarities of environmental influence than her personal ambitions. Here boundaries need to be respected. But in the family circle everything should be different.

A pat on the shoulder, a kiss when meeting or saying goodbye, a joyful embrace - all this creates a feeling of protection and need for your children, with which they feel loved and desired.

If touch is your child's love language, then parents need to constantly prove their love to him precisely in this language. These can be both prolonged embraces and various games, spontaneous touches, massage of individual body parts, combing and much similar.

If parents do not understand this love language of their child, but try to speak to him in other languages, then they will look like foreigners who do incomprehensible things and still expect some gratitude. Children do not study in the School of Love, and they have no knowledge that there are different languages

of expressing love among children and adults. And blessed are those whose languages accidentally coincided.

If your child understands the language of touch, and you have discovered this for yourself, then speak to him about your love precisely in this language. And in addition to this, you can apply all your other knowledge of other expressions of love.

Remember, if your child enters the teenage period, he also needs constant proof of your love in a language understandable to him. It should not be the same as what is suitable for five-year-old children, but through trials and observations and by the teenager's reaction, you can easily understand what, when and how is acceptable and suitable for him, and continue to prove in exactly this way that you are the best parents in the world.

Any kind of physical punishment or violence against a child whose love language is touch is perceived by him much more painfully and tragically than all other types of punishment. This is like salt on an open wound. Therefore, if you know that touch is your son's heart language, then your physical punishment should be very wise and only in extreme cases with the permission of the guilty party. It happens that the cancellation of physical punishment works much more effectively in the process of upbringing than spontaneous punishment, which can embitter a child's heart for a long time.

The language of touch is any touch to your child's body, both accidental and intentional, and therefore you should be extremely careful and at the same time rich in imagination.

If you notice that your son often touches you for various reasons, do not shy away from his touches and do not scold him for this, considering that he will become a "mama's boy." Within the boundaries of your home without unnecessary witnesses, children need to be given as much love and affection as they can and want to accept. And in response to their thirst for touch, give them more than they expect.

I remember a case when at one camp meeting I befriended two little girls who, when convenient, took me by the arms and sat

nearby at all seminars. Their brother watched this event and then, realizing that he too could be embraced, began to climb under my arm, wanting to receive my embraces. I understood that this was his love language, and gladly proved to him that I loved him too. The boy was in absolute delight.

Unfortunately, many people are afraid to touch other people's children, so as not to be considered perverts, and children do not understand why few people want to give them their attention and tenderness.

We read in Mark 10:13: "And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them." Mothers wanted the Lord to touch their children. I think the children themselves were not against it either, but the disciples were of a different opinion. There will always be those for whom touches mean nothing, but this should not be feared. Jesus still wants to touch your children with your hands, and strangers too, and adults too, putting all His love into it. And someone will understand that they have been touched in a special way and will receive special blessing.

I remember how once, greeting all the brothers, I embraced one young man, originally from the Caucasus, who liked such an attitude from my side. And then he told me that I was the first person who embraced him so sincerely. I hope I was not the last to touch him in such a way.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Song 8:7; Matt. 18:5-6; 20:34; Mark 8:22; 10:13-16; Luke 15:20; 18:15; Gen. 3:4; 20:6; Eccl. 4:11, in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. How do you understand the expression "language of touch"?
5. What types of touches do you know?
6. Why are touches so important for a child's development?
7. Are there cultural and ethical differences in showing tenderness through touching children?

8. What processes occur in the body during gentle or timely touches?
9. Which biblical characters showed love through touches?
10. How does God show His love through touches?
11. What to do if a child doesn't like touches? How to teach him to love this heart language?
12. Why are adults afraid to show tenderness to other people's children?
13. Can touches heal emotional traumas?
14. Is it possible to learn to love through touches?

Love Through Time

The most valuable resource that all living on earth possess is time. Someone has a lot of it, and someone has none at all, but all people receive it in equal measure. Someone decided that time is money, and someone understands that this is our life. Someone wants to give you their time just like that and very much, and someone can sell you their time for a certain fee. And the more professional a person is, the more expensive he values his time. And very rich people will not even sell you one minute, because they value their time above all money and will not spend it on what does not interest them.

Even reading or listening to these lessons, you dedicate your time to learning those truths that will make your life better and your thoughts cleaner.

But however you evaluate yourself, your children and your family also claim your time. And if you don't have children yet, then perhaps you have parents for whom you are a child while they are alive. And they will also be glad for the time you allocate to them for the manifestation of any love language.

Time was given to people after the fall as the main capital with which they can exchange with each other, and within which they will be able to arrange their short life.

Time is one of those love languages that is present in all other heart languages. But for someone this may be the loudest and most understandable language in which all other manifestations of your love will have special meaning and significance.

When a child asks to play with him, then most likely what is important to him is not the quality of the game, but the time you will spend with him. And whether you should invest this precious resource of yours in your descendants is decided only by you and no one else. Children unerringly determine what value they represent to you, and not only by your words, but also by your deeds and your time that you invest in them.

Everything that surrounds us consists of time that was spent on growth or manufacturing of this. And how much is your child worth in your eyes? A strange question. But it is precisely your time that you invest in him that determines his real value, and you will receive with profit exactly what you invest.

When a person builds a house for himself, his task does not include something quick and somehow, just to have walls and a roof, because he has to live in this building for the rest of his life. But when it comes to raising children, many catastrophically have no time for this, as there are more important things.

Some researchers conducted surveys and found that on average fathers spend from 30 seconds to 2 minutes a day with their children. And yet any child has no less time than any adult. Children will always find something to occupy themselves with. But who will grow up without parental influence can only be sadly imagined. No one will give your child what will gladden your heart in subsequent years. Only you yourself can invest this in him with your time and your attitude toward him.

Seeing your busyness, children will value every minute of yours that you will invest in them. This does not mean that time should be qualitative and contain some special meaning, for example, being filled with exoticism or interesting information. The time your son or daughter needs is you and your presence nearby. And how qualitative it can be, and what love language can be applied to this, you can decide together.

If you do not want to be lonely in old age, do not allow your children to be lonely in youth.

Even if time is not your child's heart language, you still need to allocate it for communication and instruction, for games and walks, for joint activities and events. Common time forms healthy relationships.

When you decide to give your child time only to punish him, make a reprimand or give another moral lecture, then the child may want to receive you exactly this way, to be in your company.

If you constantly talk to your children in any foreign language, they will quickly learn it and be able to communicate freely in it. But if you do not devote time to such training, then the result will be zero.

In the first years of a child's life, the mother spends a lot of time with him, and the language of time is close to him. And since dad is the breadwinner, and he is not always nearby, he represents special interest for the child, and father's time is very valuable for the baby. It brings a masculine worldview into the baby's life and something that cannot be obtained from mom.

The language of time is a native language for every child and person, but for someone it is a special channel to the heart through which one can convey love and open the beauty of God's character, teaching that God also devotes His time to us so that we may be happy in His presence.

As a rule, the best time that can be spent qualitatively by the whole family together is mealtime. Everyone is busy with a pleasant activity, everyone is nearby, and everything is delicious for everyone. And if desired, each meal can be made a festival for the soul.

Also, time before sleep is the most favorable for expressing your love, giving useful instructions, exchanging valuable thoughts and events and experiencing something unforgettably good that the family carries. But the most important thing happens when you wish your child good night, and he doesn't want to let you go, wraps your neck with his little hands and begins to share his most intimate thoughts and secrets, opening up in a trusting conversation. Treasure these moments and do not hurry to leave.

It is very good when, spending time together with children, your mind is directed toward each other, and not toward receiving information from outside. You should always remember that although these are your children, you do not know them well enough to understand how interesting and unique they are inside, and what enormous potential is

embedded in their souls. All this is revealed to you not in one moment, but gradually, day by day, and only during your joint time together.

Spending time with a child and communicating with him, accustom yourself to looking into his eyes. This is very important and necessary for children. With such exchange of glances, a strong emotional connection is created, and you not only hear your child, but also feel him, understand and give much more than you imagine.

Modern means of communication allow dedicating time to each other even if you are far from each other. Use these means as much as possible to spend time together.

Your child is growing. He gets new friends and new hobbies, but this does not mean that he does not need your time. On the contrary, he very much needs you and your support when he has to make important decisions and untangle complex tasks. The language of time does not disappear, and you are always in demand for communication in it. But this should be a language of love, not reprimands and nagging. No matter how bad your child may be, in your company he should feel good and comfortable. And love will find the right words to convey important information to the young consciousness and produce necessary changes in his mind.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Mark 3:14; Ps. 89:12; 126:1; Acts 2:44; Eccl. 3:1-8; 8:5-6; Eph. 6:4; Ruth 4:16; Job 1:4; 2:11-13; Rev. 10:6, in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What is time?
5. Why is time the most valuable resource for family relationships?
6. Why is it important to spend time with children not only for entertainment, but also for communication?
7. Why is it important to devote time to children regardless of their age?

8. What to do if there is no time for children, and you don't know where to get it?
9. Is it worth setting correct priorities so that the child receives proper attention and sufficient time in them? How to do this? Where to start?
10. Why does someone have time and succeeds in everything and everywhere, while someone has no time at all?
11. How to properly invest time in raising children?
12. Why is it important to be emotionally engaged in the child's life, and not just physically present?
13. How to develop trusting relationships with a child through time?
14. How to recognize that time is the main love language for your child?

Love Through Help

When a person is born into this world, he needs help from older and more experienced people, because he cannot do anything for himself. From the moment the baby appeared in the world, we, parents, help him in all matters. But the older he becomes, the less we do for him, considering that he is already big, while his need for help from another person remains. A child must become independent at some point, and all our upbringing consists in leading him to this state.

Help is an action aimed at making another person's life easier, caring for him, supporting him in difficult situations, participating in his life. Help can be provided in different forms. This can be participation in some activities, or it can be spiritual support during a crisis. This can be material support when a person is in debt or needs something, and we help him. This can relate to the exchange of knowledge, experience, practical advice that a person needs at a given time. This can be emotional support when your loved one is experiencing some tragedy or is worried about something, or doesn't know how to live. This also applies to any kind of support, encouragement and praise aimed at inspiring one's neighbor.

Expressing love through helping your child can be diverse and unique depending on the child's age, interests and needs. Conversation in this love language begins from the moment this miracle appeared in the world, when parents change the baby, feed him, teach him useful things and participate in his small affairs.

The love language through help always works in conjunction with other love languages, and sometimes, helping a child with some issues, you don't understand which exact love language you are using, but however it sounds, if unconditional love is invested in it, then it will sound beautiful.

To help does not mean to do something instead of someone and take on someone's household duties. For example, if someone is building a house and asks me to help, then I understand it this

way. I will join the work that is already being done and contribute to the cause that is already moving.

If a child's duties include cleaning his room before bed and tidying it up, then this means that he is doing this, and I can, if I wish, participate in tidying up, or I can simply praise the child for neatness. But if I tidy up instead of him while he is busy playing with toy cars and is not going to fulfill his direct duties, then this is not help, but indulging his cunning and laziness. But when a child is sick and has certain duties, for example, feeding rabbits, which he physically cannot perform, then my help to him will consist in doing this instead of him so that he can rest in peace.

If my help comes from sincere love, from a desire to improve the lives of my children, then this love language will be in demand at all times, even if it is not the child's heart language.

Help from the whole heart is needed by all children, but it should be appropriate. "Emergency help" is also help, but if doctors come to you just like that, then there will not be much benefit from them, but only unnecessary and unwanted stress.

Very often children experience their many problems very deeply and hard, not finding the right solution to their small questions. Trusting relationships help to understand the essence of their concerns, and showing support, telling about your experiences in solving similar tasks - all this is irreplaceable help that brings hope and can inspire new achievements.

Faith that the child will succeed in everything, admiration for his small victories, a request that he not abandon his affairs halfway - this is also help that testifies to your love for your child and helps to bring the started work to completion.

A classic example of expressing help consists in jointly doing homework when studying difficult lessons, where one of the parents patiently shares his experience, shows attention and wisdom, trying to teach the child to solve these tasks quickly and independently.

Any of our prayers to God is our request for help, for His presence, for God's participation in our needs, affairs and concerns. And how joyful we are when we receive what we ask for, when we believe that the Lord has answered, and we see the result. The same thing is experienced by our children in relation to us when we justify their expectations and help them comprehensively and with all our heart.

There is a difference when I do something out of love or out of a sense of duty, or because I am obliged to do it. Children see and feel this perfectly, and accept this help, evaluating it by our approach. Only sincere love, which is given by God and is the driving motive, can express love through the language of help.

It is also worth noting that some children can manipulate parents and force them to do something instead of them, pretending to be weak or sick, making themselves "victims" of excessive tasks, exaggerating difficulties, declaring themselves unloved, comparing you with other parents who only help their children. Parents should be wise when listening to such requests and statements. Having understood how to play with parents' feelings, a child can become so absorbed in the role of manipulator that this will become part of his character, and correcting something will be much more difficult than initially politely correcting him and rejecting cunning requests for help, stating that he has enough strength to perform such tasks independently. Leading questions will help to quickly understand whether parental help is really needed, or you are dealing with a cunning person who wants to put everything on you.

How to understand whether help is your child's heart language? Observe his reaction to your care. Ask him questions about how pleasant it is for him when you help. Pay attention to how and through what he expresses his love. Ask him how he thinks whether you love him, and how your love for him is expressed, what is more valuable to him in your behavior and attitude.

If you do not study the question of your child's love languages, then this knowledge is unlikely to come by itself. At the same time, the young person's soul will thirst for the expression of

love precisely in his native language, while parents will share with children what they themselves consider native or necessary.

Age requires more independence from the child in many matters, and parents can provide their children with such freedom of action that they completely stop giving them their love, considering that they have fulfilled their parental duty, and now children should serve themselves. But the child's heart thirsts for love and, not receiving it at home, begins to seek it elsewhere.

The personal example of parents in helping other people, in the care of father and mother for each other and for other family members, helps the child to assimilate and study this love language through service and care for others.

If you do not know your child's heart language, then do everything possible to determine this, and begin to study it if it is foreign to you.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Gen. 2:18; Prov. 3:27; 1 Thess. 5:14; 1 John 3:18; Ps. 21:12; 45:2; 93:17; Matt. 7:12; 2 Cor. 9:7; Isa. 58:10; Rom. 15:1; Luke 10:33-34, in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What is help?
5. Why does the need for help remain in a person even after he becomes older?
6. Why is it important not to take on the child's responsibilities if he doesn't want to fulfill them?
7. Why is help from parents especially important for children in difficult moments of their life or when they need it?
8. How not to cross the boundary between appropriate help and excessive care?
9. What does it mean to help out of love, and not out of a sense of duty?
10. Why is it important to combine help with other love languages? How might this look?

11. What signs indicate that a child is trying to manipulate parents?
12. Why do children begin to seek love in other places if they don't receive it at home?
13. How to understand that help is really important to the child, and not another love language?
14. How is genuine love through help expressed, and how can the child feel it?

Love Through Gifts

Creating our world, the Lord created in it everything necessary for the life and happiness of future inhabitants and hid many interesting things so that later, being found, they could bring much joy with them. I think that every thing, from a small grain of sand to the great sun, was made with love and with special tenderness and wisdom to bring us constant joy and benefit. And all this was given to us just like that in eternal possession.

But the most valuable Gift that one can imagine was handed to fallen humanity as a symbol of eternal God's love, to forever become our heritage. We read in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." The Lord handed over this Gift forever with meaning. In this gift God gave us all Heaven and all His good heart, and now watches how we accept this Gift and how we use it.

And what gift awaits all the faithful in the near future? It's hard to imagine, but it already exists and is called "Eternity," in which Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit will constantly gladden our hearts.

A gift is what the recipient did not deserve. This is what the giver gives forever. This is what expresses his love, gratitude and respect. A gift that is payment for something cannot be considered a gift. And if it is handed over with the purpose of receiving future benefits, then it is more like a bribe than an undeserved surprise.

Gifts are customarily given on special dates, on traditional holidays and just like that, by special inspiration and disposition of the heart.

Often we don't know what we will be given next time and how useful this gift will be to us, but we always expect something pleasant and beautiful. And how joyful it is to receive something into which the love of a close friend is invested. Gifted things can carry in themselves the positive charge of the love invested

in them and for many years remind us of this, causing tenderness and joy.

Small children have no concept of the value of money and that there is a difference in the cost of things. But they gladly accept and appreciate what falls into their hands, begin to use what cannot be immediately broken or spoiled.

For some children, and adults too, gifts are that love language through which their heart best perceives your kind attitude and accepts your love.

When choosing and presenting a gift, it is very important for parents to invest their love in it and precisely with it to give children what they did not deserve. But wisdom and understanding should be present in such action that no gift will replace you, your friendly attitude, your time, your help and kind words, gentle touches and care for the child's emotional needs. Your children need you entirely, and a gift is one of the wonderful opportunities to tell about your love for children exactly this way.

A gift that is needed and useful or that is dreamed about will always be accepted with pleasure and joy. Before acquiring or making something, it is worth being interested in the child's desires and understanding how much he will need and benefit from it.

It is important to consider the influence of all kinds of advertisements, promotions and offers that attack consumers' consciousness from all sides and can impose on children the concept of the necessity of possessing precisely this thing, about which he never knew before and lived peacefully without it. Also envy can become a driving force in the child's desires, and he will want to have what others possess.

If children already go to kindergarten or school, then you are surprised at how much new releases on the market of another children's brand capture their consciousness, after which all the children want to have this and play with this.

Manufacturers know how advertising affects human consciousness and feelings, and very skillfully promote their goods. Therefore, parents should have special wisdom and protection in these matters.

Gifts should not become a replacement for your time, attention and communication with children. They should not be given out of guilt as payment for lack of your care or as a distracting maneuver so that you are left alone. Although children do not understand everything about your true motives, they feel when you do something insincerely.

When choosing a gift, it is important to consider the child's age. What makes him happy at 3 years old can become an insult to him at 10 years old. And the older your children are, the more wisdom is necessary to have in choosing the thing you want to give them. If you really want to please your child, then ask him what he would like to receive from you as a gift, and then discuss this together and do not hide your intentions to give him what he wants, and if you promised, then be sure to fulfill your words. Waiting for a gift already makes the child's life a holiday. He is already happy in anticipation of his dream coming true.

A gift can be not only some toy, but it can become a useful book, a joint trip, visiting unique places, friendly pastime, games, preparing special food, going to a restaurant or museum, personal letters and much more that will strengthen your relationships more and bring genuine joy.

A gift should not be payment for good behavior or a condition for future obedience. Then this is no longer a gift, but trade: you to me - I to you. Although sometimes it is pleasant to receive payment for one's labors and efforts, but in pursuit of the material, spiritual values can be lost.

It is written in Eccl. 7:7 that gifts corrupt the heart, and if you do not believe this, then someday you will be convinced of this if you do not restrain your emotions and spoil children with everything in a row, considering that this is the best expression of your love.

If you see that another toy is not your child's heart language, then give him what he will accept with joy. This can be learned by asking him about the thing he wanted to receive in order to be happy and joyful. Or ask your child how and in what he sees the manifestation of parental love. As a rule, children will sincerely tell you what makes them happy in your relationships, and what they don't like about you. And then act.

If gifts are your child's love language, then here you need to show special wisdom and caution in choosing the next surprise for his heart. Gifts need to be beautifully and originally packaged and presented with special love and joy. After all, this is not only a thing, but also your attitude. This is a memory of your love. This is much more than just a gift. The child sees your heart in this.

Gifts should not upset and overexcite. They cannot be taken away, canceled, broken or spoiled as punishment. And if this love language is not your native one, then do not judge another's feelings by yourself. Believe that each person best accepts and understands love in that language which is closer to his heart, and not to yours.

If you have many children, and for some of them gifts are the heart language, this does not mean that others also perfectly understand such expression of your love. Each child should receive what is closer to him in spirit and heart. And let everything be with love for you. 1 Cor. 16:14.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read James 1:17; Acts 20:35; Rom. 6:23; 8:32; Matt. 2:11; 7:11; Luke 6:38; Prov. 3:27; 11:25; 18:16; 21:14; 1 Cor. 13:3; 2 Cor. 8:12; 1 John 3:1, in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What are gifts?
5. Why are gifts a special love language for some children?
How to determine this?
6. How to properly choose a gift for a child for whom this is his heart language?

7. Does God like to give gifts to His children? What has He given you?
8. What influence does advertising have on children's desires to receive certain gifts?
9. Why shouldn't gifts be given out of guilt or duty?
10. Why can't gifts be used as payment for good deeds or as an advance for good behavior?
11. What is dangerous about excessive spoiling of children with gifts?
12. Why is it important to fulfill promises about gifts?
13. What spiritual values can be lost in pursuit of material gifts?
14. Why can't one judge others' perception of gifts by one's own preferences?

How to Determine Your Child's Love Language?

Indifference is a disease of modern society, and unfortunately, many people are infected with it, including our children.

Growing up in a house where there is no constant expression of love, the child's mind adapts to such a life and finds pleasure in what this world offers them.

But then their parents learned about love languages and decided to find out which one is native to them, and which one their child speaks.

If your home does not practice love and express it in any way, except for spontaneous decisions and holidays, then no one expects any conversation in the language native to the heart, and when familiar words or actions slip through in relationships and briefly warm the soul, the routine of indifference absorbs these random manifestations and teaches nothing to anyone, forming a habit of not being surprised by anything.

But children are given to us so that we constantly prove our love to them and teach them to manifest it toward other people. For where love is, there God and His Spirit are present. And in love, any mind will develop completely differently than in an atmosphere of its absence.

Even if parents know their heart languages, they will still have to communicate with their children and with each other in all other languages, because a united family embraces the fullness of relationships, including every reasonable and necessary manifestation of love and care for one another.

Knowing the fact of which love language is native to your children gives you a good chance to prove your love to them with enormous advantage and success.

Which of you would be pleased to give gifts that are not appreciated, or to offer help that is not needed?

Love is the best reward for every child and the highest payment for them being in your life. Love helps raise compliant men and women. An atmosphere of love drives unclean spirits from the

home, and the enemy of the soul cannot be where the Lord reigns and where God's Spirit brings much fruit.

Any deeper knowledge of your children and their true feelings and desires should begin with your sincere prayers that the Lord would reveal to you the secrets of children's hearts and hand you the keys of love to their souls.

If the child is very small and does not yet go to school, then you can understand their heart language by observing their behavior, but there is no guarantee that you will be able to accurately determine what is dearest to them.

You can offer a young schoolchild a choice of games to understand their preferences. They might want one in which you can touch each other more often, or one where more kind words are spoken. The child might wish to go somewhere together or help make something. With diverse free choice, the younger family member will definitely choose what is closer to them.

A more delicate approach is needed for teenagers. They will not always tell you what you expect to hear, and upon understanding your true plans, they may manipulate your desire to show them your love and make you do what will benefit them. In such cases, it is necessary to feel out the ground in conversation with them and practice communication in each love language for some time. Specialists advise dedicating about two weeks to communication in each language, and then, after a week's break, try and apply speaking the next love language.

But in all cases, parents need to be observant, patient, attentive, and wise. The child's free decision in response to your suggestions to do or organize this or that activity in their life will help the young person determine their choice and accept what will be dearest to them.

The good news is that every child has some heart language, and you need to find it through the right approach.

If from an early age of your children you understood these laws and manifested love in all its forms and spoke about it and taught children to express it in all languages, then most likely your child will become a polyglot in love.

Children's games can show you in which love language they are interested in building and expressing their relationships with each other and with toys.

If you see that a spiritual core has been formed in your child that helps them stand firm in various trials, and there is firm confidence in the direction toward Heaven and a pull toward Heavenly life, then it is worth initiating such people into more promising relationships, telling them about the laws of love and what happiness it is to love neighbors and give them your kind attitude.

If your child does not have a sense of security in your presence, then most likely they will perceive any manifestation of your new attitude of love toward them with suspicion. Also, if they are not used to expressing their emotions and thoughts on this topic, you need to approach them with special wisdom and patience.

It is important to consider the age of the child you wish to learn more about.

When trying this or that communication, observe what brings the child the most joy and ignites enthusiasm in them.

You can find this out through leading questions: "What in my behavior makes you happy?" or: "How do you understand from my behavior that I love you?"

Listen to what children tell you, what inspires them and what makes them happiest.

If the child expresses dissatisfaction because of your attitude, then try to understand whether you are causing them pain in their native love language. Remember that any punishment in the heart language is perceived by the child much more painfully than other disciplinary methods.

Write down all your observations and discoveries and discuss them with your other half. Let your desire to know your child's love language be a common cause, and where one does not notice, the other may discover more. Or someone may be able to express their love better than the other will do.

Consider the environment and habitat of your child. Other children or people may create unnecessary stress in their life, and in such a state it will be hard for them to accept anything good from you. Listen to what children tell you. In ordinary trusting conversation, they may tell about many of their secrets and open their heart to you.

When such a moment comes and you determine your child's love language, you can comprehensively try how best to express your love in this language and build your questions about this already within the framework of these discoveries. But always remember that with age or due to circumstances, the heart language can change or be out of place if there is an urgent need for other relationships. Let your knowledge always be directed toward building happiness, love, and friendship in the life and environment of your children. And they will definitely notice this, accept it, and be happy in the presence of one who loves them so much, cares for them, and consciously accepts them as they are.

I think that in this desire to study your child's love language, it would be good for you yourself to understand your heart language and teach your child to communicate with you in this language too and sometimes think not only about themselves but also about your happiness. Tell them about how you most like to receive love from them, and let them decide how and when it is best to manifest it toward you. Love knows how to act in both directions.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read 1 John 3:18; 4:8; 1 Pet. 4:8; Matt. 18:10,14; Prov. 1:8; 3:13-18; 18:15; Ps. 88:12; 102:13; 126:3; Rom. 12:9-10; Gal. 5:13; 6:2; 1 Cor. 16:14, in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?

3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. Why is it necessary to know your child's love language?
5. Why can a child's mind adapt to life without manifestation of love?
6. Why is it important for parents to communicate with children in all love languages, not just their native one?
7. What influence does an atmosphere of love have on the spiritual state of the home?
8. What character qualities should parents possess when determining their child's love language?
9. How can children's games and leading questions help in determining a child's love language?
10. What leading questions can be asked to a child to determine their love language?
11. Why is it important to listen to children's stories about their inspiration and happiness?
12. What role does cooperation between both parents play in determining a child's love language? Amos 3:3.
13. How can the surrounding environment influence a child's ability to receive love? 1 Cor. 15:33.
14. Why is it important to teach a child to understand their parents' love language?

School Years

In every person's life there are those temporal boundaries that define their life changes with the words "before and after." And, as usual, these are the boundaries that will never bring us back.

I think each of us remembers that very day when we went to school. Although it is customary to celebrate this date every year, with the transition to a new grade, but that first day when you go to first grade for the first time is especially significant in the life of every child. They begin a new stage of development and formation.

One way or another, from other children or from parents, in preschool time the little one hears that soon they will go to school. They know older children who have already become schoolchildren, hear stories about school from their parents, and somewhere in their thoughts try to imagine what it is like.

We have advice from the Spirit of Prophecy to keep children with their parents until 8-10 years old, not giving them to any educational institutions, but at the same time engaging in their spiritual development. Global changes occur in the child's consciousness at this time and by 9 years old they physically and morally become ready to receive great knowledge, and can easily master any science. And as the child grows, we are advised to give them home education, where they could go through the school program without leaving their father's house. In our time, technically this has become possible and a very sought-after undertaking.

But unfortunately, in many countries laws have been issued that require parents to send their children who have reached 6-7 years old to state educational institutions where they receive state education according to a certain program. Even with the possibility of teaching their children at home, not all parents are ready to take such a step due to financial or personal considerations. Many simply have no idea how to teach a child at home conditions and it is easier for them to send them to school and engage in their own affairs during their absence.

But secular schools, in addition to knowledge, instill certain atheistic ideology in students, and the godless upbringing of other students has its influence on believing children.

Knowing this situation, many communities organize their own church schools, where brothers and sisters dedicated to God take responsibility for raising the children of their church members according to God's principles of education. Although this costs money and is not a free blessing, it is worth choosing this path.

Thanks to the development of the internet and digital technologies, many schools practice teaching children remotely, where children do not need to go anywhere, but they can receive new knowledge and complete school assignments without leaving home. In connection with this, parents can exercise greater control over the behavior and occupations of their child, but this does not free them from responsibility for the further fate of their children.

The struggle for the spiritual life of one's children should continue as long as they are under the power of parents and live in the same house, and have not yet made their covenant with Jesus, and then this struggle moves to the next level, and parents constantly remember in their prayers their already adult and independent children, until death takes someone from this world.

The Lord has not promised us an idle and carefree life, so it is worth remembering that being a parent is a lifelong calling that is divided into different stages, but connects different generations with strong spiritual and family ties and has a strong influence on every family member, even when death takes someone away forever.

We will not be able, even under the most favorable conditions, to keep our children with us all our lives. This is not part of God's plans. Someday we will have to give them complete freedom and allow them to choose their own life path and acquire their own experience and engage in arranging their lives outside the parental home. We, with our own hands, will

need to cut the umbilical cord and give emotional independence even to the closest children, for their own good. The exception can only be sick children who physically cannot live without outside help.

If it happens that your believing children attend a state school, then it is necessary to ask for special protection for their minds and do everything possible to have trusting relationships with children and every day listen to their stories about experienced events and give your instructions on various issues. It is not difficult for children to share everything that happens with those who love them and whom they trust. And may the Lord grant wisdom on how not to cause harm in relationships with peers with this knowledge.

It would be good for parents to know by name all their children's classmates, know every student by sight and study the characteristics of each of them, spreading their unconditional love beyond the boundaries of their homes.

School years are unique in that at this time your children receive basic knowledge in many disciplines that shape their worldview, reveal the essence of things, and make them literate in many spheres of life activity. It is necessary to instill in children that God stands at the head of any science and is the Creator of everything and it is from Him that true knowledge, wisdom, and revelation come. He reveals and shows the great and inaccessible that your children do not know, if they learn to cry out to Him.

The Bible contains an example of the education of Daniel's companions, under the most unfavorable conditions. Their faithfulness to God and His principles made them 10 times wiser than all other peers and still serves as an illustration of how the Lord blesses faithfulness and devotion to Himself.

Parents, do not think that by sending children to Babylonian schools, they will somehow miraculously, by themselves, be protected from corrupting influence and depravity. Without your struggle and participation in their spiritual opposition to the world, they themselves will not constantly row against the

current, but at some point, perhaps, decide to fold their oars and begin to fight against you and your principles.

A person's choice is that territory of their personal responsibility for their life that must be respected, but while parents have power and influence over their children, they need to do everything possible to attach them to Jesus and teach them to resolve all their questions precisely with Him. And then constantly ask for blessings on the lives of independent children.

Any science that begins to be studied opens its treasures of knowledge and depths of revelations. It teaches the researcher its secrets and shows harmony in relation to all other sciences. And everywhere, in every science, one can trace one common feature that God is love, from Whom all wisdom begins and to Whom everything wise then returns.

Jesus prayed that we, remaining in the world, would be preserved from evil and the influence of this world. And this is possible if His name is written in the heart and His will stands as the priority of everything. God desires that we learn and master all kinds of sciences, acquiring valuable knowledge, but in such a way that this knowledge does not separate us from Him and does not lead us and our children to the madness and godlessness of this world.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Luke 2:52; Isa. 54:13; John 17:15; James 1:5; Prov. 2:6; Dan. 1:3-20; Col. 2:2-3; 1 Pet. 5:8; Jer. 33:3; Rom. 1:20; Eph. 6:4, in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. Do you remember your first school day?
5. Why is the first day at school an important milestone in every child's life?
6. What advantages does home education give from a spiritual point of view?
7. What risks arise for believing children in secular schools?

8. How do church schools help preserve the spiritual upbringing of children?
9. How can parents support the spiritual development of a child who studies in a state school?
10. What role do parents play in the spiritual upbringing of their children during school years?
11. Why is it important to instill in children that God stands at the head of any science?
12. How can the example of Daniel and his companions inspire believing children and parents?
13. How does unconditional love and support from parents influence a child's school life?
14. Why should school be not only a place of acquiring knowledge, but also of spiritual growth?

Watch and Pray

The fact that your child went to school and began to spend more time learning new sciences does not mean that parents have fulfilled their duty, and now let others take care of raising your child. Any subject and any science brings something new into the student's life, changes their thinking and establishes them in what they study, so that for the rest of their life they can apply the knowledge they have received.

The most important and direct obligation of parents is to get ahead of all teachers and instill in children the principles of God's law and form their opinion based on the truth of God's word. This is not done in one conversation. Such upbringing begins from the moment of birth and moves into an active phase during the period when the child begins to reason logically and understand what they are told.

We are in a spiritual war not only for our minds, but also for the minds of our children. The enemy of the soul has set his nets everywhere and waits in ambush, seeking idle and curious souls.

Your children's new school friends and the school program are new opportunities for the forces of darkness to find a loophole into the young student's mind and sow seeds of sin in them. But children of believing parents, in addition to the school program, should also receive spiritual education.

It is good when the school is a church project and its leadership understands all the responsibility for the education and upbringing of the children who have entered it. But even teachers dedicated to God do not remove from parents the responsibility for spiritual home education, which should not end, but on the contrary, can become more complex.

Parents should soberly approach the assessment system adopted in the world, which is present in all schools. Grades divide students into excellent students, good students, and poor students and are not always objective. They may depend on the teacher's biased opinion or evaluate the result of a completed

assignment without considering the student's efforts and their thirst for knowledge.

Although the modern education system has adopted the practice of evaluating knowledge and abilities, this should not be made the goal and meaning of education. By and large, when further choosing a life path and creating a family, it is not so important what grades you had in school.

Not all children of the same age are the same in perceiving the curriculum. Some have not yet formed biochemical processes in their minds and they simply do not perceive the information they receive and physically cannot keep up with those who catch everything on the fly. Classmates immediately notice those who lag behind and the enemy of the soul begins to divide the class into smart and foolish. And, as a rule, those who lag behind the school program get used to the position of an outsider and do not strive to improve their skills in order to occupy a higher social status. And even if they succeed at something, the established public opinion is not so easy to change.

Parental love and their wise approach to the child's academic achievements become powerful protection from all kinds of segregation.

Segregation is the division of society into separate social layers and groups, which leads to inequality and discrimination of lower layers by higher ones.

All children and their parents should understand their true price, paid for them at Golgotha, which makes all people equal in God's eyes and does not divide society into favorites and outcasts.

Parental love in trusting relationships protects young students in all cases and helps them have high self-esteem and hold themselves with dignity, despite the opinion of others. It is very important for children how their peers perceive them and they can clearly see which social stratum they belong to.

Any wise teacher can quickly identify the leader in the class and those who depend on others' opinions and adapt to the mood of those around them. But not every teacher will use this knowledge to bring students to unity in love and friendship. Unfortunately, other laws reign in the world.

God is interested in His children and their children being protected from evil in any society and in any situation. He is very attentive to everything that happens in families dedicated to Him and hears all prayers that are daily offered to the Throne of grace, to which He gives an answer.

If in preschool age, parents kept their children under constant observation and knew what was happening in the lives of the little ones, then when sending children to school, they can no longer control their behavior and will be able to assess the situation only from the students' stories.

Parents' prayer teaches their children to rely on God in all matters, to receive wisdom and strength from Him, to be under constant God's protection, and to understand that they are special and not of this world.

Trusting conversations open to father and mother the whole picture of their child's life outside the home, about their experiences and successes. And it is important for parents to show their interest in everything that happens in their child's life and give their assessment of various events, guided by Biblical principles. While father and mother are an unconditional authority for the child, they will always listen to the opinion of these loving people and take the next step, considering their parents' point of view.

Parents need to watch over what happens in the hearts of growing children and in prayer ask for special wisdom for gentle instruction.

God is in alliance with praying parents and gives such families much more good and protection from evil than those who neglect prayer and studying God's will.

Parents should understand that morning joint prayer and inspiration for a new day are much more important than all school grades and academic success. Father and mother prepare their children for Eternal Life, so that their little people make the right choice at the right time and dedicate themselves to serving God. It is important for parents to set the right priorities and convey to their children's consciousness what is more important and better in this life, and what is only an addition and temporary in nature.

In addition to the school program, children need to be taught lessons of faith, love, happiness, and friendship. They also need to be given wise instructions on financial literacy and prepared for the happiness of future family life, taught to prepare tasty and healthy food. Children need to be given instructions about independent entrepreneurial activity and instilled with practical skills in useful work and in demanded spheres of service to society. Attention should also be paid to musical education and physical activity.

If a child does not understand everything in chemistry or does not keep up in biology, but at the same time knows how to prepare healthy food from available products and has many friends, then they will have more wonderful prospects in the future than one who sits in textbooks, wanting to have high grades.

The world offers to strive for wealth, power, pleasures, spectacles, and entertainment. But those who achieve this understand that this is not what the soul needs, that everything is vanity and vexation of spirit.

To get ahead of the world in instilling true values - this is what parents must necessarily manage to do before children grow up and become independent. And then they can reap what was sown and rejoice in good fruits.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Col. 4:2; Eph. 6:18; Ps. 119:105; 127:1-5; Rom. 12:2; Matt. 6:33; 26:41; Isa. 41:10; 54:13; 1 Thess. 5:17; 1 Pet. 5:8 in light of this chapter.

2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. Why cannot school replace parents in raising children?
5. What does it mean to "get ahead of all teachers" in instilling God's principles?
6. How does parental love help a child resist segregation and discrimination?
7. Why should spiritual education of children be a priority for believing parents?
8. Why should school grades not be made the goal and meaning of education?
9. How can public opinion influence a child's self-esteem?
10. Why is it important to teach children skills not included in the school curriculum?
11. Why are useful work skills more important than academic performance?
12. Why is morning prayer more important than school success?
13. How can parents support their children under pressure from society?
14. Why is it important for children to understand their worth in God's eyes?

Evolutionary Thinking

The theory of evolution is a science that tries to prove to the world that all diverse living organisms and intelligent beings are the result of some strange accident that happened billions of years ago. Suddenly life appeared from nothing and began to progress, being reborn into new complex species, taking something better from previous generations. As a result of this evolution, animals appeared that at some point in history decided to become intelligent beings.

If anyone has studied biology and anatomy, they can declare that any disease and mutation lead to degeneration and death, without improvement of subsequent offspring. And the complexity and harmonious structure of a living organism at the genetic level amazes every researcher, putting any theory of evolution at a dead end.

But one way or another, this theory has not gone into the past as a dummy, but has firmly entered the school curriculum, established itself in secular society and is purposefully imposed on the world as the only logical explanation of where we came from and where we are going. But at the same time, it continues to be a theory. And a theory is an assumption that requires proof, and there are none in the "theory of evolution," and what supposedly exists can be put in one suitcase. And on this suitcase of ancient bones, learned men try to build fantastic assumptions about the development of the world. But modern technologies and visualization of their arguments come to their aid.

Unfortunately, this evolutionary spirit has very firmly established itself in the minds of many people, and the world has swallowed this foolishness and created scientific atheism - a science in which there is no place for God. And the place where there is no God is filled with darkness, cold, and immorality. For products of random occurrence there can be no moral values, morality, and meaning to their life. The concept of evil or sin is absent, and the culture of society and social values are unnecessary restrictions that can be ignored. And all this is

taught to our children under the guise of a theory that in 170 years of its appearance in the world, they have still not been able to prove.

Unfortunately, children's study of this science brings many psychological and moral problems into their lives. When a person cannot identify themselves and understands that they are a simple accident in which the fittest survives, then the whole meaning of life comes down to taking everything from life, living only for oneself and for one's pleasure, achieving one's goals at the expense of others and doing what one wants with impunity. And for many, accidental life is not worth valuing and fighting for, and there is no meaning and joy in it when you are not at the top of power and strength. But it is also sad that the place in a person's heart that is intended for God is filled by another spirit, opposite to God's, and intelligent beings simply do not have the strength and power to resist the presence and influence of demons in their lives. And what will the spirits of wickedness in high places give people? Many problems that will be impossible to solve on their own.

What influence does the evolutionary point of view have?

- loss of faith in God;
- doubt in Biblical truths;
- destruction of perception of reality in the creative process of our world's development;
- absence of alternative points of view;
- narrowing of horizons;
- predominance of material values and passionate desire to possess them;
- absence of moral guidelines;
- no responsibility for one's behavior in light of Eternity;
- absence of fear before just punishment for sin;
- the concept of sin becomes blurred or completely absent;
- everything is evaluated from the position of strength and power;
- not recognizing one's specialness and uniqueness;
- loss of meaning of life and impossibility of understanding it;
- devaluation of human life;

- predominance of pride and selfishness in one's heart;
- animal fear before one's death;
- development of apathy, depression and emergence of suicidal thoughts;
- loss of compassion;
- development of discrimination;
- destruction of family values and respect for parents;
- raising a godless generation;
- loss of spiritual heritage.

Fortunately, in such societies God has established laws that restrain godless passions and keep people in fear of punishment. God continues to love even godless representatives of the human race and desires that they be happy and go toward the light, living in utter darkness. Even in the laws of the most atheistic countries, many principles of God's laws are embedded that cannot be rejected, otherwise there will be catastrophe and anarchy and lawlessness will begin.

The most ardent defenders of the theory of evolution are not professors with academic education, but young elementary school teachers who received an educational program and must teach children according to it, without delving into the meaning of the program. The state educational system does not allow changes to be made to the curriculum and therefore teachers and parents have no chance to change anything in the proposed subjects.

But believing parents understand what spirit dominates in secular schools and therefore, if they do not have the opportunity to send their child to a Christian educational institution or teach them at home, then they need to ask for special wisdom to get ahead of teachers in instilling the correct understanding of human origin and wisely resist the secular upbringing of their children.

Truth that has convinced a child will forever remain in their heart and no amount of lies will be able to shake what has a firm foundation, logical explanation and mass of evidence in nature and God's Word.

It is also worth understanding that those who have evolutionary thinking are victims of worldwide deception and need true light, which can only be given to them by those who believe in the True God and Jesus Christ whom He sent.

God-fearing parents need to be wise and careful in communicating with an unbelieving teacher, because any negativity extracted from communication will necessarily be reflected on their children who are under the influence of this educator.

I have heard many testimonies from believing brethren who studied in Soviet schools or sent their children there, about how they resisted the atheistic spirit, how they went through difficulties and trials, and came out of the fire as victors, and some were lost forever.

Dear parents, if you have the opportunity not to send your children to secular schools, then do everything to protect your heritage from the corrupting influence of the world. Even if this prompts you to change your place of residence or lose your job in a comfortable place, take advantage of any opportunity for your children to receive true spiritual education. It is worth it and will delight you in all subsequent years when you see the fruit of the Spirit in your children's lives.

If you do not have such an advantage and life circumstances force you to send your children to secular schools, then fight for them, and God will help you in any difficult situation and lead you through this trial and the flame will not scorch you.

It is worth remembering that God's law and the Bible have survived all regimes and have not undergone changes, and have clearly conveyed to us what is still relevant, valuable and correct, giving meaning to life and its values.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Gen. 1:1,26-27; 2:7; Job 12:7-10; 38:1-41; Isa. 44:24; 45:12; Ps. 8:4-6; 14:1-4; 19:1-2; 90:2; 139:13-14; Col. 1:16-17; Rom. 9:20, in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?

3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What does the theory of evolution represent, and why does it continue to be considered only a theory?
5. How does understanding God as Creator influence the meaning of human life?
6. What consequences for morality and ethics arise from belief in the evolutionary origin of man?
7. Why cannot the concept of holiness and sin, good and evil exist without God?
8. What spiritual and psychological consequences arise in children who believe in evolution?
9. How does faith in God's creation help resist atheistic teachings?
10. Why does evolutionary thinking contribute to the destruction of family values?
11. What role does Christian education play in protecting children from false teachings?
12. What can believing parents do to protect their children from the influence of evolutionary worldview?
13. How can believing parents resist the generally accepted system of values?
14. Is it worth fighting for one's children? If yes, then how and what should be undertaken?

The Importance and Benefits of Reading

Reading is an important and integral part of the upbringing and development of a child's personality. It helps them increase their vocabulary, expand their horizons, form healthy imagination and critical thinking, cultivate patience and perseverance, improve memory, help understand the needs and motives of other people, develop worldview and broaden their outlook, form cultural values and teach logical construction of speech, and do many other useful things that contribute to the healthy development of the psyche of the growing generation.

The current age of digital technology development has brought many new changes to culture and society's life. Gadgets have absorbed everything and have begun to offer humanity much more than those who are now called adults had in their childhood. But with this discovery, new diseases and mental disorders have also appeared, which were previously unknown, but in our time have fallen upon the world like a tsunami wave, destroying something beautiful and natural in people.

Learning to read begins from the moment when the child begins to understand speech and respond to the meaning and sense of their parents' words. Although the child's consciousness is naturally inclined to absorb easier information and perceive short stories and tales, it is also characteristic for it to remember everything it hears and build logical connections in its mind between reality and imagination.

If it is customary in your home to read the Bible aloud, gathering at the family altar for daily worship services, then, as a rule, parents do not worry about how understandable their conversations were to their infants and unconscious toddlers. But being present at such reading, the child's brain absorbs everything it hears around, and the Holy Spirit forms the consciousness of such children according to what has entered it.

The Bible is not just a book, but God's Word, which is capable of creating something beautiful and useful for the spirit, soul and

body in a person's life. As a rule, Bible reading takes place in a calm environment, creating an atmosphere of Heaven, peace and love in the home. And this has a great influence on the formation of a child's healthy psyche and has a calming effect on all other participants in this event.

The older the child becomes, the more their perception of the world and the information they receive develops. And reading useful and spiritual books greatly facilitates parents' work in raising and forming the personality and spirituality of their children.

The time comes when children become readers from listeners. This transition begins sometime in everyone's life and leaves pleasant memories in parents' minds of how their child tried to put letters into syllables, and from these syllables compose words, and from words - sentences and stories. It is difficult for us to imagine what new logical chains, biochemical processes and neural connections occur during this learning in the area of consciousness, but this process is designed by God to form from each child a developed personality capable of competently receiving and transmitting necessary information.

Learning to read and improving this skill is very important in the mental and moral development of any person.

Unfortunately, in our time gadgets have made their adjustments and deprived many children and parents of those advantages that reading paper books gives, but many thinking parents consciously limit children's access to electronic means of information transmission and consciously oppose scientific and technical progress with the classical form of education, through live communication, reading and personal contact.

Personal communication within the family and circle of your acquaintances will never replenish the vocabulary and erudition of your children with those new words and knowledge that useful and safe books provide. You simply have no need to use intricate speeches and build analytical chains of events in everyday life that are offered in printed works. But it is worth choosing what is useful and necessary for children, taking into

account not only their age, but also the spiritual meaning of those printed works that appear in your home.

Let the Bible and spiritual literature become your children's most beloved books.

Interesting children in reading can be done very easily with each child, if you involve them in the process of what is being read, ask them about what they understood, how they see what they heard and what they liked. Having feedback with the child, parents can understand the level of mental development and select for reading exactly what will correspond to their child's intellect.

You should not be afraid to complicate and increase the volume of information being read. If your child is interested in what you are reading, then they will let you know this without unnecessary words.

Reading develops a person's imagination, which helps them create images of what they read in their mind and then apply these abilities in all other spheres of life. Abstract thinking forms logic, analysis, creativity and creative abilities.

Empathizing with book heroes, empathy for other people develops in the child and it becomes easy for them to understand what a person feels in this or that situation.

When children have learned to read independently, this frees up a lot of time for their parents and brings new knowledge and skills into children's lives that their father and mother cannot give.

It is important to take into account the child's interest in one or another sphere of life and creativity. If a boy is more inclined to understanding the technical structure of the world, then may the Lord give you wisdom about what books will be useful in this area. If a girl has inclinations toward medicine, then give her the opportunity to delve deeper into this science by selecting the right books.

Not every parent can find and buy the right book in a store. But in a library you can obtain much of what will expand children's

horizons. But you should be very careful and prudent, giving the child the opportunity to independently choose books for themselves to read. Any library is Babylon, where along with the useful there is also deadly dangerous spiritual poison present, which will destroy your children and poison their consciousness. One bad book may be enough to knock your child off the path and bring lawlessness into their life. Let your eyes and ears control everything that children take and read. But it is better to not give them something useful than to let them go at the mercy of their personal taste and choice, while this is still under the control and authority of parents.

Conversations about the harm and benefit of worldly and scientific books teach children to make the right choice before they actually encounter danger in reality, and it can come from friends with whom your children may exchange their books.

Personal relationships with Christ will teach your children to listen to the voice of conscience and choose exactly what will be for their good and benefit. Having learned communication with God through the Bible, children will seek answers to many of their questions in God's word and receive them. It will be easy for the Holy Spirit to remind them of what the child studied and learned from the Bible. It is easy for God to communicate through His Word with His children and reveal to them much of what is useful and necessary for everyone who seeks and thirsts to know.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read 2Tim.3:16-17; Ps.118:11,105; Josh.1:8; Rom.15:4; Col.3:16; Prov.15:14; Acts.17:11; 1Tim.4:13; Eccl.12:10-14, in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What benefit does reading bring to the development of a person's personality?
5. Why is reading an important part of raising and developing a child?
6. Does reading help children develop attentiveness, patience and perseverance?

7. What is the difference between reading books and receiving information from gadgets?
8. Why does reading aloud with parents form healthy psyche in children?
9. Does joint reading bring parents and children closer together?
10. Why does reading useful and spiritual books reduce the level of stress and anxiety in children?
11. How does reading help in developing logic and analytical thinking?
12. Why is it important to discuss what was read with the child?
13. Why is it important to control what exactly the child reads?
14. How does personal communication with God through reading the Bible help children?

Reading and Spelling

When a child learns to read, a new world of information and imagination opens up for them. Every word must be associated with certain actions or objects, and imagination creates a real image of what is being read.

If you were taught the sound of foreign letters and asked to read a text in this language, then reading unfamiliar words, your imagination would be turned off, and you would not be able to tell anyone about what you read. But if this is your native language and familiar words, then the mind begins to reproduce images of what is being read in the imagination and convey the meaning of what was read to consciousness. And spiritual things have the ability to influence conviction and change something in character and thinking.

Reading is divided into different types: aloud and to oneself, with expression and transmission of emotions and without that. It can be fast and slow, literate and not very, complete and selective. It is difficult to understand a silent reader and determine their ability to read. But parents should pay attention to how competently their child reads, how they place stress marks, finish sentences, emphasize this or that important place. Children do not immediately master this science and father and mother need to provide an example of correct pronunciation of the text being read.

Reading aloud develops memory, forms attentiveness and concentration, improves diction, teaches literacy, increases vocabulary, forms logical, analytical and critical thinking, develops the ability to retell, forms breathing.

There are also spiritual advantages that parents need to know and consider: reading aloud reduces stress levels, develops empathy, forms perseverance, patience, attentiveness, reasonableness, persistence, courage for public speaking.

The habit of reading instills in the child a love for knowledge, teaches them to listen to others and share their knowledge, not be afraid to make mistakes and have confidence in themselves.

When reading, the child mainly uses other people's work and voices other people's thoughts, but the Lord has also put the science of spelling into human abilities. As a rule, children begin to learn this at school age. This is what teaches children not only to receive knowledge, but also to share it, to show what level they are at and how literate they are. Spelling consists of orthography, grammar, punctuation, morphology and syntax. This science is not mastered in one day. A person requires many years of learning to achieve literate expression of their thoughts and feelings in written form.

An illiterately composed text, absence of rules and presence of errors create a bad reputation for the writer and they cease to inspire trust and exert influence.

Remember how many times you wrote school essays? And how many books our teachers called us to read and retell? Sometimes, how we wanted to play and not take these books and textbooks in our hands, but we were forced to study this and now we do not regret it at all.

It is important to constantly teach the child to write and read, correctly express their thoughts and feelings aloud and in writing. Unfortunately, in many modern schools they no longer attach importance to this skill and introduce a form of checkmarks and crosses, where it is enough not to formulate the correct answer, but only to mark it. Such an approach does not develop intellect and does not teach literacy. And if you noticed that your children's educational material does not call them to write and read a lot, then introduce a rule in your family: rewrite useful books or Biblical verses in a special notebook. Let this habit become a norm of life for children and a rule of their home education. Be sure to check how competently your children write, how they construct sentences and what mistakes they make. And let your instructions in this matter be gentle, imbued with love and patience.

It is also important to pay attention to the child's handwriting. It should be even, beautiful and clean. We all once learned this, and if these first steps remain in your memory, then it will be easy for you to understand how difficult it is for little ones to

begin this learning, how quickly their little fingers get tired, how they want to drop everything and go play.

But there is such a word "must," which calls to sit and draw incomprehensible signs.

If you see errors or difficulties in writing the first letters, then show how this should look correctly, how to hold the pen, where the second hand should lie and what posture should be at this time.

Spelling not only teaches children literacy, but gradually forms the character and psyche of the child. Organization and literacy in this matter is transferred to other spheres of life, teaches order, quality, organization in other matters as well.

A literate person will immediately notice a "mistake" in another person's work, but their reaction will depend on their personal internal qualities.

It is worth noting that different children have different abilities for reading and spelling. Some catch everything on the fly and master these sciences without errors, while others cannot succeed at anything and find it difficult to assimilate grammar and reading. Someone lags behind in development and needs time for the necessary processes to form in their head. And there are also those who have impaired brain functions from birth and are simply not capable of adequately perceiving and transmitting the proposed information, although they look normal externally. Parents need to understand who their child is and accept what they discover in them and give exactly the load that the child's mind is capable of accepting and processing. There is no need to make a child prodigy out of an ordinary child, or demand Olympic records from a disabled person.

Reading and spelling should not take up all study time, as at this time the body does not have physical activity. Let these lessons be no more than an hour at one time and alternate with physical exercise or active games.

As children grow and master the ability to read and write, it is necessary to involve them in active participation in reading the Bible in the family circle. Select their favorite stories for them and ask them after reading to retell what they understood, how they would behave, how bad differs from good.

The Bible has a very beneficial influence on the development of the intellect and consciousness of the young reader. The child not only learns literacy when reading God's Word, but also passes through themselves those truths that form their principles, establish them in truth, teach them to distinguish sin in any form and comprehensively develop good character traits.

God's promises, learned in childhood, will forever remain in consciousness and will be reminded by the Holy Spirit at the right time.

If possible, introduce lessons of copying the Bible into your home program and check the literacy of this event.

Remember that in contact with God's Word, not only do you teach your children something, but the most powerful Forces in the entire Universe enter into their upbringing. God loves to cooperate with those who do everything possible on their part to open to the young mind the beauty of God's love and raise worthy heritage for the Heavenly Kingdom. And children will learn what you offer them and what you will expect from them.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Philem.1:19; John 8:6; Prov.1:8; 2:6; 9:9; Eph.6:4; Ps.1:1-3; 118:11,99-100; James 1:19; Acts 17:11, in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. How can spiritual things, read in text, influence a person's character and thinking?
5. Why is it important to monitor how a child reads, places stress marks and makes accents?
6. How does reading influence the development of memory, attention and thinking?
7. What spiritual qualities does reading aloud form?

8. Why does spelling play an important role in a child's education?
9. How can modern teaching methods based on checkmarks and crosses affect a child's literacy?
10. Why is it useful to rewrite books or biblical verses in a notebook?
11. How does spelling influence a child's character and organization?
12. Why is it important to consider children's individual abilities for reading and writing?
13. How does reading the Bible help children not only develop literacy, but also form spiritual principles?
14. Is God interested in our children being literate?

Money in Child Rearing

We live in such a time when money is represented in all its diversity, reflecting all epochs - from the classical form of payment to virtual. Money is a universal tool for mutually beneficial exchange, payment for services, assessment of the value of something, accumulation and investment, which is used to simplify trading operations. In their absence, commodity exchange (barter) arises, but this is not always convenient and often leads to excess or great losses.

One way or another, our entire civilized world is material, and society is built so that money is its integral part. Everything is bought and sold. If someone decides to abolish money, then very soon they will have to invent it and put it into circulation again.

The history of money is very interesting and diverse. In the beginning there was primitive commodity exchange. Then precious metals and stones were introduced for paying for goods. After this, minted coins appeared, which had a certain weight and value. It was very convenient to pay with them and save them, understanding how much you have. Then paper money appeared, which facilitated their transportation and storage. They became a guarantee of the state and banking system that they could be exchanged for valuable metals and precious stones. Later, cashless electronic money came into use, with which you can pay without cash. In our time, cryptocurrency has appeared, the application and value of which is difficult to determine for an ordinary consumer.

It should be taken into account that the last test of faithfulness to God, according to Scripture, will take place in the financial sphere, so it is important to understand the essence of trade relations and see those traps that the enemy of the soul has set.

Children do not need money, but caring for them requires large financial investments. Children need to be explained that family money is not an easy gift, but the result of many efforts and labor of their parents.

At some point, it is necessary to give the child instruction in the financial sphere, explaining what money is needed for and how to use it correctly. While the child is small, this can be done in a playful way, starting to teach that money has a certain value and you can acquire necessary things with it.

Children aged 3 to 5 years do not understand the value of money and can give away all their "savings" for a beautiful wrapper. Parents need to give wise instruction and come up with games that will help the child get acquainted with money and understand that different goods have different costs.

The child needs to be given the opportunity to hold cash in their hands, teach them to recognize it and distinguish more valuable bills or coins from less valuable ones. It is necessary to explain the cost of certain goods, showing what money can be used to pay for them.

For more advanced learning, you can create a "virtual store" with toy goods, where there will be real sellers and buyers. For playing with money, it is not necessary to give real money - you can come up with an alternative: draw and print "virtual" bills with a certain value, explaining to children the meaning of the numbers on them.

You should not be afraid to introduce the child to the world of money, but at the same time it is important to explain that money is not a goal, but a means and tool for achieving set goals.

Children very quickly understand the value of money and that you can quickly acquire desired things with it. But it is necessary to teach them to distinguish the desired from the necessary.

The older the child becomes, the stronger their interest in money and desire to possess certain amounts that they can spend on what they like. Here special wisdom is needed to explain to the child the difference between "I want," "I need" and vitally important things. This can be done with the help of questions, so that the child themselves determines what is important and what is not very important.

It is also worth giving lessons in frugality and generosity, showing that expensive things are not bought for small money, and to buy them, it is necessary to learn to set aside and save. It is important to convey to the mind and show in practice that charity brings more happiness than acquiring material values.

The Bible speaks more often about trade relations between people than about other spheres of relationships. In God's Word there are many examples and instructions about how to properly handle money. It is important for parents to take note of these verses in order to instill useful biblical advice on resource management in children.

In school years, children become more literate and learn to count quickly. From this age they need to be given pocket money and taught how to handle it better, observing how they spend it.

At this time it is necessary to explain that money can not only be spent, but also set aside, saved or invested in long-term projects that will bring profit. Children should understand that budget planning is the basis of financial literacy, helps to wisely manage available funds and plan further expenses.

Financial education should also include the concept of charity and setting aside tithes for God.

The school curriculum does not contain lessons on financial literacy, so parents need to study this science themselves and pass it on to their children. Literacy is not only knowledge about something, but also the ability to use it wisely.

Children need to be explained that money is not only a means, but also time, part of life that a person spends on earning it, and literacy in this matter makes a person responsible, expands their horizons, opens perspectives and advantages of a wise approach, and also protects from many mistakes.

Children should help parents with household chores without thinking about payment for their work, but it is worth determining some types of work for which they could receive additional money. For example, washing a car or cleaning a car

interior. Useful paid work teaches children that they will be able to achieve many of their material desires and goals through their own efforts. You can agree with neighbors or friends to offer your children some types of paid work and services.

It is necessary to involve the child in the planning process. For example, if they want to buy some expensive toy that they consider very necessary, then it is necessary to explain the price of this thing to them and tell them how, through setting aside and saving funds, they can accumulate for this and acquire it. Planning develops patience and teaches wise handling of available funds.

Children should understand that money is not endless and it sometimes runs out, that mistakes in planning their budget and spending money is a normal phenomenon that should not be feared, but which should teach something.

It is important to explain that careless handling of money leads to debt obligations, which is undesirable to have and should be avoided.

The personal example of parents in how they handle money will not escape the attention of children and will have a certain influence on their approach to financial literacy. Teaching your children this science, you yourself will discover much for yourself and see your mistakes.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Job 28:12-17; Matt.6:24; Luke 12:15; 1Tim.6:10; Prov.2:1-6; 8:10-11; 13:1; 21:5; 22:29; 23:4-5; Gen.13:2; 24:53; Eccl.5:8-9; 10:19, in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What is money, and why is it needed?
5. From what age is it best to start teaching children to handle money?
6. Do you think a child needs financial literacy?
7. How to explain to a child the difference between paid and gratuitous labor?

8. How to explain to a child the difference between "I want" and "I need"?
9. What games will help children understand the value of money and goods?
10. Why is it important to teach children frugality?
11. When giving out pocket money, should you observe where children spend it?
12. How to protect children from greed and envy?
13. How to cultivate charity in a child?
14. How to teach children to see money as a means, not a goal?

Financial Literacy

The child is still small and needs to play and explore the world, and it's not worth filling their head with such complex issues and depriving them of their childhood. But it should be noted that our world and our entire life are connected to money, they are everywhere and without them, like without water, you can't go this way or that way. Money is not a goal, not a meaning and not even happiness in life, but the ability to earn and spend them, the ability to manage them and the ability not to live in debt, as well as knowledge about what they are, will protect your children from many troubles and disappointments.

Some parents are actually ignorant in financial literacy and don't stress about money, but the closer we get to the finale of world history, the more expensive our life becomes, and the less personal money we have. No one is surprised by such words as inflation, financial crisis, price increases, but this shouldn't be - these are artificial events aimed at making the poor even poorer and the rich even richer.

Poverty and wealth are not high or low income, but a state of mind and the ability to wisely possess money, considering all possibilities and risks.

God desires to have a wise people in all respects and we cooperate with God when we teach children to live according to God's principles, explain to them the advantages of wisdom over ignorance and plant in their pure minds seeds of truth and reasonableness. The time will come when they will leave the cozy nest of parental care and begin to create their own nests and their own world, independent of you. But what you gave them, what you taught them, what you sowed in them, will help them build their life and manage their home.

Financial literacy is an important skill that should begin to be instilled in children from early years. It helps not only in money management, but also in forming such qualities as honesty, wisdom, responsibility, patience, generosity, reasonableness, independence, the ability to live in abundance and be content

with little. The Bible gives many instructions and examples about how to build business financial relationships and be faithful to God. It doesn't teach that wealth is sin, but openly declares that love of money is the root of all evil (1Tim.6:10).

It's also important to know the truth that even very large amounts of money do not give a person complete independence and freedom. Jesus gives freedom, and independence depends more on personal agriculture and an accessible source of clean water and strong health than on big zeros in the bank.

Educational schools do not teach children financial literacy, so this task lies with parents and does not free them from responsibility in this matter. This is quite a lengthy process and although it doesn't take much time, it is quite extensive and deep, both in theoretical and practical approach. It would be good for parents to have a thick notebook to record the basics and principles of financial literacy in it over many years and refresh in children's memory the passed lessons of faithfulness and frugality.

An entrepreneur is one who undertakes something, studies something and tries something. This is one who decides on something and in many cases goes by faith, not by sight. Become entrepreneurs in teaching your children important sciences and the result at the output will be much better than you expect and imagine.

God is the True Owner of this world and all its riches. He is the Beginning and Source of all wisdom and knowledge. Without Him everything becomes vanity, and with Him everything finds meaning. Therefore, like any other matter - everything should begin with prayer and recognition that I have nothing, but He has everything, whose throne is Heaven, and the Earth is His footstool (Is.66:1).

We read in Hag 2:8: "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts." So let us turn to the True Owner and receive everything necessary for life and knowledge.

In school, in mathematics lessons they teach to add and multiply, divide and subtract. What your child will choose from

this depends on what management principles you put into their mind.

Gratitude is the first lesson that the child must learn.

They must understand that everything material in their life is not self-evident, but someone's mercy and care for them. With their words and prayers of gratitude, parents give lessons that they themselves receive everything from above and depend on God's mercy and generosity. Although children are not obligated to thank their parents for their love and care, the personal example of grateful father and mother forms a grateful spirit in children as well. And verses from the Bible on this topic create something very important and useful in the child's mind. We read in 1Thes 5:18: "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

Don't be afraid to read the Bible to children, even if much seems complex for children's understanding. The Holy Spirit conveys to the child's mind and imagination much more than we imagine, and it will be much easier for God to remind what was heard than what a person doesn't know.

Of course, at 3 years old it will be difficult for a child to understand the structure of cryptocurrency and the influence of interest rates on the world economy, but through simple games with commodity exchange, generosity, reasonableness they will very quickly understand the basics of financial relationships and take first steps in the sphere of entrepreneurship.

Children quickly notice that even virtual acquisitions of useful and interesting toys gladden the heart and are a more interesting event than the absence of such.

The next lesson is the formation of generosity, in which the correct attitude toward money and its purpose is laid. Through their self-sacrifice and comments on good deeds, parents teach their offspring that to give and share, to serve someone with their means and goods is God's gift to man, which the Lord Himself constantly demonstrates in all His care for the world. Not all children easily assimilate these lessons, but the purposefulness of parents has strong influence and brings good

results. It is characteristic for the child's selfish heart to take everything, take away and keep for themselves. They simply don't know how and don't know other means of communication with the world, and this should not be feared. "It is more blessed to give than to receive" Acts 20:35.

Generosity and self-sacrifice gladden the heart and bring happiness to the soul of every person.

Frugality is what teaches the child to be careful in handling toys and things, and also gives understanding that by setting aside small means, you can gather large treasures and acquire more valuable things. We read in Prov.21:20: "There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up."

Responsibility in relation to real money is an important instruction that forms in the child's consciousness the difference between the virtual world and reality. Children, seeing how you can acquire many desired and tasty things with real money, begin to understand the true value of cash, but here arises a task for parents to correctly and timely convey lessons of reasonableness and frugality, that not everything that is sold is useful and necessary.

And this is only the beginning.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read James 1:17; Prov.6:6-8; 10:22; 22:2; Ps.49:10-12; 2Cor.9:6-7; Luke 6:38; 16:10; Eccl.7:12; Matt.6:19-21, in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. Should one, while laying the foundation of truth in the child's heart, remember the words of warning from Mal.3:14-18?
5. Who is the true Owner of all riches in the world? How does understanding that God is the True Owner of riches influence the attitude toward money?
6. How does the Bible relate to wealth and poverty?

7. Why can the ability to manage money protect a child from disappointments?
8. What does "poverty and wealth are a state of mind" mean?
9. Why is gratitude considered an important lesson for children?
10. What spiritual principles underlie financial literacy?
11. Why do parents bear responsibility for children's financial education?
12. What qualities need to be cultivated in a child so they learn to live in contentment? 1Tim.6:6.
13. What dangers does love of money bring with it?
14. Why is personal independence more connected to agriculture and water than to large amounts of money?

Laws of Financial Literacy

Any science, any society, any natural phenomenon and spiritual sphere have their laws on which they are based. Law is the firm and principled foundation of any teaching, any science and any phenomenon, whose Creator and Organizer is God. Law is impartial and acts regardless of who uses or studies it.

Financial literacy also has its laws, which will operate both in the lives of good and righteous people, and in the lives of evil and sinful ones.

A knife in the hands of a cook is a blessing, and in the hands of a criminal - a terrible weapon.

- Wealth is not a goal and meaning, but a means and tool through which you can improve much in this world, serve many. It should not be put on a pedestal and serve it (Prov.23:4-5).
- God is the Master and ruler of all laws and riches of our world and world order (Gen.1:1; Ps.23:1-2; Hag.2:8).
- True wisdom and literacy comes from God, and He gives knowledge and reveals mysteries (Prov.2:6).
- Neither small nor large wealth should occupy God's place in a person's heart and displace the priorities of God's Kingdom (Matt.6:33).
- Managing money requires wisdom, caution, control and reasonableness (Prov.2:10-12).
- Any income, acquisition, profit, as well as any mistake or failure, should evoke gratitude to God for His generosity and those life lessons that teach much (1Thes.5:18).
- Recognizing God as Owner of all one's riches is an event called: "giving tithes." The tenth part of profit and income belongs to God and is that sanctuary which a person has no right to encroach upon (Lev.27:30; Luke 20:25).
- A true and pleasant sacrifice to God is not a small part of what I have much of, but what is very dear to me and I am ready to part with it forever, not expecting compensation or praise (Luke 21:1-4).

- True happiness comes not when a person receives much, but when they give much, but at the same time, have reasonableness (Acts 20:35; 2Pet.1:5-6).
- Money doesn't appear from nothing and doesn't fall from heaven, but you need to apply effort, labor, ingenuity and wisdom to have it (Prov.14:23).
- It's important to distinguish the necessary from the desired, good from pompous, fashionable from practical and not be greedy for every advertisement (1John 2:15).
- The mind, in trade deals, should govern the will and form patience. Not everything you want should be bought. To double your capital, sometimes you need to fold it in half and put it in a piggy bank (Prov.21:20).
- Any purchases should not be impulsive, especially when there is pressure from outside. Speed is welcomed in charity and in serving others. Prayer and counsel with God in any deal helps avoid unnecessary expenses (Prov.19:2; 21:5).
- The ability to say "no" to your vain desires will help save a lot of money for more useful purchases (Prov.25:28).
- Expensive things are not bought for small money. To acquire something significant you need to be able to save and set aside (Prov.13:11).
- A rich person is not one who earns much, but one who knows how to set aside and save. Part of income must be preserved for future needs (Gen.41:34-36).
- Accumulation, savings and acquisition of everything useful should not become the goal and meaning of life, separate you from God and divide you from friends (Matt.6:19-21).
- Friendship, love, happiness, peace in the heart, health and a happy family are not bought with money and do not depend on their presence or absence (Prov.15:17; 17:17).
- Contentment with what you have is the greatest treasure and wealth (1Tim.6:8).
- Any good seed sown in good soil will bring much good fruit. So money wisely invested in the right business brings good profit (Gal.6:7; Matt.25:16-17).
- Reasonable planning and goal-setting help preserve money from unnecessary expenses and foolish investments (Luke 14:28).

- You need to spend less than you have and earn. Also don't borrow if you have nothing to repay with (Prov.22:7).
- Learn from your own and others' mistakes and draw conclusions from others' losses (Prov.1:5; 19:20).
- Money should be earned honestly, without deception, without causing damage or suffering to other people (Ex.20:15; Prov.33:3).
- Modesty adorns a rich person and doesn't cause envy in other people (Prov.13:7).
- Cut your coat according to your cloth. You need to live not according to fashion, but according to your means (Prov.28:19).
- If wealth brings fear, anxiety and deprives the heart of peace, then ask for wisdom so the Lord will show the essence and cause of this problem (Prov.17:1).
- Quick and easy money often carries danger and can be a trap (Prov.28:20).
- Don't envy those who are more successful, who are richer, who arranged their life better than you. Envy deprives of joy from what you've achieved and gives nothing in return (Ex.20:17).
- Money earned by deception or on someone else's blood will not bring happiness and blessing to life (Hab.2:12).
- Money spent on good and helping other people brings more joy and meaning than that which lies in a piggy bank for years (Prov.11:24-25).
- Greed and stinginess do not add friends, do not bring honor to a person, do not bring happiness and deprive the soul of the true meaning of life. Everything in nature serves for the benefit of another (Eccl.5:10).
- God gives wisdom in resource management to everyone who asks Him for it with faith (James 1:5-6).
- The Bible contains very many important and wise pieces of advice on business and entrepreneurial activity (2Tim.3:16).
- Useful work, besides money, brings many blessings and joy. Our organism is arranged so that when performing useful and necessary work, it produces hormones of joy, from which the heart rejoices and awareness of satisfaction comes (Eccl.5:18-19).

- A wise and diligent worker will always be in demand by other people (Prov.22:9).
- A lazy dreamer will live in constant need and disappointment (Prov.6:6).
- A sum of a thousand dollars begins with setting aside one small cent. Any small savings over time become large sums (Prov.13:11).
- Be faithful in fulfilling financial promises and agreements, even if you have no profit. A contract is more valuable than money (Prov.22:1).
- Beware of financial traps, debt obligations and advertising promises. Show reasonableness and foresight before making a final decision. Ask others, consult with specialists, study the situation comprehensively (Prov.14:15).
- Joint efforts or investments can bring more blessings than working alone. Hired workers, necessary tools and auxiliary technical means will bring more profit than the work of one person (Prov.14:4).
- Be honest, timely and generous in paying wages to those who worked for you (James 5:4).
- Don't carry all eggs in one basket. Don't invest all your money in one project and don't store all your savings in one place (Prov.27:12).

Ask children to tell about their financial plans, goals, problems and mistakes. Communicate on this topic, share your thoughts and your experience with them, learn other laws.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Prov.10:4; 11:28; 13:22; 16:3; 17:16; 21:17; 22:9; 28:22; Lev.19:13; Ps.36:21; Col.3:23-24, in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. How are financial laws connected with God's principles and wisdom?
5. Does everything in your life correspond to God's requirements? Is there something for you to learn?

6. Why is wealth not the goal and meaning of life, but only an instrument and means?
7. Why is true happiness connected with giving rather than receiving?
8. How to distinguish the necessary from the desired and not succumb to advertising influence?
9. How can prayer and counsel with God influence financial decisions?
10. What does it mean to be able to say "no" to your desires and how does this help?
11. What distinguishes a rich person from one who simply earns a lot?
12. Why are friendship, love and peace in the heart more important than money?
13. What does the principle of sowing and reaping mean in finances?
14. Why is it important to learn from your own and others' mistakes?

Dangers of Financial Literacy

Jesus is the best Example of the combination of worldly wisdom and spiritual values. He, being the Ruler of all, chose for Himself such a way of life and such a social status as to be accessible to all layers of society. He could have been born in the most beautiful palace, but His choice fell on a cattle barn. His parents could have become universally recognized and influential people with an impeccable pedigree, but He chose the widowed carpenter Joseph, who had children from a previous wife, and the unknown girl Mary. Jesus, possessing Divine wisdom, could have revealed to the world of that time the secrets of electricity, quantum and nuclear physics and digital information transmission, could have taught them to build skyscrapers, airliners and large steamships, but He chose for Himself the path of a humble Teacher, whose works were passed from mouth to mouth. He did not leave the world a single photograph of Himself, not a single audio recording of His sermons, no one even took notes of His speeches, but at the same time, people have been talking about Him for about 2 thousand years and constantly find new discoveries in those few words that nevertheless reached us and have amazing power to transform life.

Jesus became an example of righteous life for both poor and rich people, both for the literate and for the ignorant. He loves both groups and desires that all turn to Him and come to repentance. It is written in Is.52:15: "So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider."

Studying the basics and laws of financial literacy, it's worth considering the dangers of this science. Wealth is not only prosperity and standard of living, but also a direct competitor to God, which claims to serve itself. It is not the poor in spirit who stand in power over nations, not poor people who arrange wars and revolutions, not those in need of bread who offer false

teachings to the world. Those not in crisis are inclined to satiety and idleness.

Financial literacy makes a person wise in business relationships, it gives them knowledge in the area of monetary connections, it teaches to foresee dangers and calculate success, considering all risks and prospects. If you take away all money from a rich person, then after some time they will become rich again. And if you give a poor person many means so they become rich and lack nothing, then after some time they will become poor again. Literacy makes a person literate, successful and wise in many worldly matters. But there is danger that a literate person will begin to rely on themselves and their wisdom, attributing all glory to themselves and their ability to think extensively and trade. The most beautiful cherub once lost Heaven because of pride in his high position and, unfortunately, many literate people fall into the same trap of their significance and independence from God and, acquiring earthly riches, glory and power, lose the right to Eternal life and descend into the grave without any hope.

When teaching a child financial literacy occurs without connection to spiritual biblical values, then an image of this world is formed in consciousness and the person is more inclined to perceive material things than the spiritual component. When a person's consciousness begins to concentrate on the earthly, on the material, on accumulating and owning goods of this world to the detriment of spiritual values, then practically no place remains in life for God and living relationships with Him, but a form of these relationships is formed, which can be presented to others that it exists. Materialism closes a person's heart to spiritual values and God has no place left in the lives of such people.

Financial literacy can create an illusion of safety and security in wealth and great property. Although extreme poverty is also not something good for people. We read Prov.10:15: "The rich man's wealth is his strong city: the destruction of the poor is their poverty." When trials come into such a person's life, they will rely more on their knowledge than on God.

Great danger can also be in the fact that a knowledgeable person will begin to manipulate less literate people and use their education for personal gain or will begin to dominate those who don't understand financial matters very well.

Financial success can lead to neglect of generosity and charity. Increase of wealth can form fear of losing existing accumulations and close the heart to the needs of God's work and those who ask for help.

The desire to get rich quickly leads to the risk of investing in dubious enterprises, to risky decisions and games. And the very presence of all kinds of gambling businesses opens many temptations for those who wish to improve their material condition by easy means.

In acquiring riches there is also danger that money will begin to be perceived as meaning rather than as means and the focus of vision will shift not to investing these means in something good and useful, but to accumulating for oneself, for the sake of a greater quantity of money in one's piggy bank.

There is risk of emotional burnout in the thirst for increasing one's treasures, in the pursuit of fashion's demands and in the desire to maintain the status of a rich person. The world offers its system of values and it is very difficult to resist this influence and maintain independence for those who want to correspond to these rules. Being a slave to the system is a disease of our time, from which it is very difficult to exit without God's help.

Financial literacy without God's guidance opens paths to dishonest ways of obtaining and preserving money. Fraud, tax evasion, speculation on others' ignorance, non-payment of wages or debt obligations, building financial pyramids, deception and other problems - this is a brief list of what many educated people engage in our time.

Acquiring earthly riches can turn into sport and cause unhealthy competition in relation to other successful people. The desire to surpass others or surprise neighbors can become the main criterion in using available knowledge.

There also arises risk of becoming a victim of deception by more cunning people. If a literate person is offered complex schemes for increasing income, they may not understand the catch and rely on their perceptiveness, not asking advice from God.

If in a family one of the spouses has the basics of financial literacy, and the other doesn't want to hear anything about it and lives as they consider right, this can lead to rupture of relationships, to excessive control of family finances or alienation from each other.

Financial life will always attract the attention of a literate person and offer new knowledge, distracting them from truth and taking their personal time to increase knowledge in the world of money, calling to follow new trends and values.

A literate person not led by the Holy Spirit may lose taste for modest life and the ability to enjoy simplicity and what is given for free, not see joy in little things and not understand why love is needed when everything can be bought.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Rev.3:17-18; 2Cor.8:9; Heb.13:5; James 2:1-9; 5:1-5; Luke 12:15; 18:25; Phil.4:12-13; Prov.11:4; 13:11; 16:8; 19:7; 21:6; 30:7-9, in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. How does Jesus by His example show the correct attitude toward material values?
5. Why do rich people restore their condition after loss faster than poor people?
6. What dangers arise if a person begins to rely on their wisdom and knowledge instead of God?
7. How can financial literacy lead to pride and independence from God?
8. How to avoid forming an illusion of safety in wealth and material goods?
9. Why can increase of wealth lead to fear of loss and closedness to charity?

10. What should a rich person do to inherit Eternal Life?
11. How can a believing person preserve spiritual values while having large income?
12. Why is it important to preserve the ability to enjoy simplicity and little things, and what the Lord gives for free?
13. Why is it important to combine teaching children financial literacy with spiritual values?
14. How can the thirst for increasing wealth cause emotional burnout?

Cultivating Charity

The most difficult thing for a selfish heart is to give, sacrifice, share, serve, and live for others. But it is precisely in selflessness and self-denial that the beauty and power of the Gospel lies. What feelings do rich people evoke in you who don't hide their greed and pride? Who are ready to strip you bare and even plunge you into lifelong unpayable debt to satisfy their self-interest? I think that at best you would pity them or they would disgust you. But they too need a Savior and want you to show them Jesus.

And would you want your children to be greedy people who would wait for your death to receive your property and savings, on which they could have some fun?

What does Jesus feel now, watching His children who say: "I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing"? What will the Lord answer to such statements? I think it is very sad for Him to see such a condition, in which they don't even know how miserable, pitiable, poor, blind and naked they are. But He loves us and offers a way out of such a condition.

What will you write on the clean sheet of paper that the Lord will hand you in the form of your child's developing character? Will you ask Heaven for your son to be greedy, envious, evil and disobedient? Will you make sure that these qualities successfully develop in your child and that no good can knock him off this path? I think that no effort is needed to develop such a character. To turn on darkness, no special switch is needed, it's enough to remove the source of light and impenetrable darkness will surround you.

If I decide that my child should somehow learn some expected virtues on his own, then most likely I will be surprised that an incorrigible egoist has appeared in my family, who thinks only of himself and is not interested in the opinions and needs of others.

When only one child grows up in a family, he gets used to all parental love being directed at him, and his parents belonging

only to him, and as a rule, it is in his father and mother that he sees those friends with whom he can play, undertake something and learn something. And in families where there are two or more children, it's easier for parents to occupy their household members in games with each other, and at this time calmly solve their own issues.

Charity is a sincere desire to help someone, to serve someone, to share something and to do something good, expecting nothing in return. It begins where there are two or more people and can be material, emotional or spiritual support.

God has put something into selflessness that a person can experience only while being in this state. Charity is not some kind of event, along with other virtues, but it is the essence and character of God. He, being above and stronger than all, continuously serves all His creation, giving and sustaining the life of everything. And the Lord desires to reveal this trait of His character to us and restore it in us.

What is easier to do: write a beautiful life plan on a clean sheet of paper and live by it, or make corrections and additions to a list of everything necessary and unnecessary, crossing out and painting over what you don't like?

Parents who have small children have more prospects to instill the concept of charity in their child's heart and help him develop these skills. Although the young being will resist such arbitrariness somewhere, but personal example and adult support will very quickly teach him such a life, and God will apply His hand and write His laws of love and service in the young heart.

Personal example of caring for others, stories about what you did and whom you helped, create in the child's consciousness a certain image of the right attitude toward others.

It's important to give explanations for your actions and tell about how much joy serving the needs of others brings, how it helps people, how they become happier and how it makes you happy.

These stories should echo with biblical truths and form in the child an understanding of God's plan regarding the needs of this world.

Virtue can be multifaceted, touching both physical needs and satisfying people's emotional needs. A child can be taught that you don't need to wait for a person to fall into need and then help him, or plan something big and great, but you can gladden the heart with small signs of attention, small participation in his needs. In serving others, it's not the volume or result that's important, but the motive with which this service is performed.

It's important to teach a child to empathize with others, so that he can understand what others feel through his own feelings. Tell about how you sympathize with someone and how it hurts you when someone has something hurting. By developing empathy in this way, you will teach the child to notice the needs of others and feel their mood, and the Lord will suggest what and how can be done.

Not all help should be material. A kind word from a loving and compassionate heart can help a sufferer look at his problem differently and find a better way out and solution.

Encourage children for participation in good deeds, praise them for their first attempts at self-denial, let them rejoice that you like such behavior and attitude toward the needs of others. Together think up what can be done for the good of others and what can be given, and then let them act.

Inspire the child to independently choose to help someone. Listen to his plans and encourage every good idea.

It's important in virtue to form the right motivation and convey to consciousness that one should serve not for praise or recognition from others, not for glory and respect, but because that's how Jesus lived and that sincere motive is more pleasing to God and beneficial for the heart than the opinion of others.

The result of good deeds very strongly affects the child's hormonal system and brings a feeling of joy and pleasure,

which strengthens in consciousness the benefit from such activities.

It's good when charity becomes a daily practice, and not some good deed once a month. Offer various options, from good deeds to a simple smile and good wish.

When a child has his own personal finances, he must be taught to set aside money to help others, respond to calls for donations and give away forever as much as his heart will suggest. And even if your child makes a mistake and gives everything not where you consider it right, then first find out what motive moved him and why he decided so, and don't scold him for generosity and naivety. Greed will come by itself if you don't practice selflessness.

It's important to convince the child that God especially loves and blesses those who do good with all their heart. That money is not everything that can be had in this world. And let Christ's example of sacrifice always be that reference point and standard from which to take example.

Don't forget to teach that it is God who gives us everything necessary and to thank the Creator for every opportunity to serve other people.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Titus 3:14; 2 Cor. 9:6-7; Luke 3:11; 6:38; Prov. 11:24-25; 19:7; 21:13; 28:27; Matt. 6:3-4; 25:40; 1 John 3:17-18; Gal. 6:9-10; Rev. 3:17-18, in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What does charity mean from a biblical point of view?
5. How do you think Jesus feels watching greedy people?
6. Why is it important to show an example of sacrifice in your family to your children?
7. What biblical stories about sacrifice would you tell your children?
8. How to convince a child that good deeds are joy, not obligation?

9. How to motivate a child to help others sincerely, without expecting praise?
10. Why is it important for charity to become part of daily practice?
11. Why is it important to talk about how God blesses generous people?
12. How to help a child form the right attitude toward money and donations?
13. How to teach a child to rejoice for others and their successes?
14. Why is it important to combine spiritual education with practical manifestations of charity?

Prudence in Charity

Prudence, also known as good sense and sound judgment, is a person's ability to soberly assess a current situation, think through their actions and decisions based on available knowledge and lived experience. This is the ability to analyze all possible causes and consequences of what is happening in order to avoid traps, mistakes or rash decisions.

Prudence in charity is a combination of wisdom and kindness, mercy and common sense, caution and responsiveness. Prudence suggests how to reasonably provide help, who really needs it, teaches to distinguish need from wants and manipulations, helps not to become a victim of fraudsters, includes readiness to help and serve not for praise or reward, but from a desire to help and participate in the needs of others.

Prudence is a consistent part of personality formation and spiritual growth. It is a natural process of mind development and life experience acquisition.

Not only children, but also adults, can impulsively react to all sorts of situations, without thinking about what is behind it and how it would be better to act. Mistakes teach, and prudence helps to avoid many mistakes and make exactly those decisions that you won't regret later.

It is written: "...show in your faith virtue, in virtue knowledge, in knowledge self-control..." 2 Peter 1:5-6. These verses are also called "Peter's ladder."

Parents should teach their children to analyze their good deeds, especially in the sphere of finances. Money is such a sphere of life that very many people claim to possess, especially if it can be obtained without any effort. And cultivating charity implies teaching prudence, which will help the child avoid deception, show wisdom in any good deed, grow spiritually and have an abundance of other blessings.

The personal example of parents and their reactions to requests for help open to the child a new world of opportunities for good

deeds. Wise parents, helping someone in the presence of children, afterwards explain the motives of their actions, share how necessary their help was, and also are not afraid to tell about how they became victims of deception, responding to sincere calls from fraudsters.

Children learn what they are taught.

Before helping someone, it's worth understanding the reason that led the needy person to his need. God calls us to selflessness, but He does not approve of encouraging laziness, alcohol or drug addiction, thirst for easy profit or deception of any kind.

The child's motive may be the most sincere in the desire to do good, and if he helped anyone, then encourage his action. And if you saw that it was a mistake, then ask for wisdom on how to explain it so as not to kill good motives at the root.

I have been a frequent witness to how charitable people who became victims of fraudsters and lazy people subsequently refused to help anyone to avoid being deceived again.

Helping the poor does not always consist in giving him money or buying him food. Many teach that if a person asks for fish, give him a fishing rod and teach him to catch fish independently. Such explanations help children learn to distinguish true needs from laziness.

When we begin to talk about helping the needy, street beggars, who are everywhere, immediately come to mind. Here it is necessary to give clear explanations that in helping such people one should be especially vigilant and prudent, but if you see that your child sincerely wants to help someone, then let him do it. Maybe at this moment the Holy Spirit wants to ease someone's suffering through the good impulses of a little person.

But almost all people need real help, especially those who live without God and without any hope.

Home conversations about all sorts of good deeds, parents' stories about personal charity and what good consequences

their good deeds had, teach children to analyze cause-and-effect relationships and plan their good deeds.

You can invent games in which children will be forced to help someone, and then hear words of gratitude and love addressed to them.

When discussing good deeds, be interested in children's opinions on how they would act in this or that case. Why should one person be refused and another helped? Teach them to say a firm "no" when they see that their kindness wants to be used for selfish purposes.

Make the child understand that charity is not always help with money. It can be expressed in time spent with someone who needs comfort or a kind word. Selfless labor or volunteer service for the benefit of others also forms good qualities in a person's heart. Prayer for someone's needs can bring great blessings and relief.

The child should be explained why people fall into need, what reasons there may be and how to avoid this. Someone perhaps got sick or injured, someone lost their job or housing, someone became a victim of temptation and fell into addiction. Teach the child to see the root and essence of the problem and learn from others' mistakes so as not to find themselves in similar situations.

It's worth teaching children to resist manipulation from those asking, when they, pressing on pity and seeing that they won't get what they expected, begin to press on conscience and feelings of guilt, accusing of greed, hypocrisy and callousness. Let prudence suggest that refusing to help such manipulators was the right decision.

If you had cases when you were in need, prayed for a way out and the Lord answered you through His people, then be sure to share this and tell how hard it was for you in this hopeless situation, and how the Lord solved this issue and how this help supported you and eased suffering. Your personal experience will be much closer to your children's hearts than other people's experiences.

The development of empathy in this case will help them understand the feelings of others and participate in their needs.

Call, if possible, children who help someone to follow the action of their good deeds and understand what benefit they brought, what mistakes were made and how these deeds can be improved and expanded.

It's worth discussing whether it's worth giving money to those who will obviously spend it on alcohol or cigarettes, and why one cannot encourage laziness of able-bodied people with one's help, who don't want to work but want to be supported by other people.

It's important to find out children's opinions about who and how should be helped and who shouldn't. Let them share their opinion and reason with you about the pros and cons of this or that participation.

In social networks there are many calls for help that are difficult to verify and should not be reacted to unambiguously, but if the heart is inclined to help, then help.

It's worth giving examples of how Jesus served people, easing their needs, how He selflessly worked and brought light to every person. But there were always those who did not accept His service or even drove Him away. The same attitude from people awaits us, and we must be ready for everything.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Eph. 5:17; Prov. 2:10-15; 3:21-28; 4:7; 5:1-2; 8:12-14; 11:24-25; 16:16; Phil. 2:4; Heb. 13:16; Matt. 6:1-4, in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What is prudence and why is it important in charity?
5. How does prudence differ from impulsiveness?
6. How to explain to a child the difference between real need and laziness?
7. How to teach children to resist pressure from manipulators?

8. How should instructions be given to a child so that his prudence doesn't grow into greed?
9. How to teach a child to say "no" to those who try to abuse kindness?
10. Why do street beggars require special vigilance in charity?
11. Should children be told that some people stop doing charity after being deceived?
12. How to inspire children to continue good deeds despite possible difficulties?
13. Is it important to teach children biblical foundations for developing a sacrificial spirit in them?
14. Why are sacrifice and selflessness better than accumulation and greed?

Reward

A reward is one form of encouragement for achieving an established goal or completed task. It is a powerful stimulating means calling a person to certain actions to achieve an expected result.

Rewards can be material (money, valuable things), social (medals, certificates of honor, acceptance into society), spiritual (respect, recognition of talent or authority, raising social status), internal (satisfaction from success, joy, increased self-esteem, awareness of usefulness and significance).

All of us who believe in Christ are promised various rewards, many of which we already receive in this life, and something awaits us only after the Second Coming of Christ.

The greatest reward that will be given to all the saved, regardless of the duration of their faith and the amount of work performed, will be the same for all and issued to each forever. Jesus taught this in the parable of the workers in the vineyard from Matt. 20:1-16. These servants labored under different conditions with different loads, but each received a denarius. Humanly speaking, it's difficult for us to understand the mathematical calculations of the Master of the house, but it is said of Him that He gave the reward out of goodness, not according to the volume of work. But when I understand what the denarius symbolizes, then I will have no questions for God when expecting and receiving the reward. The denarius in this parable symbolizes Jesus, Whom all the saved will receive equally. This also symbolizes Eternal Life, which will be given to all on equal terms, regardless of deeds. This is also a symbol of righteous character, which will be sealed by God in those who have strived for holiness all their lives, and with which every saved person will be endowed at the moment of their resurrection. The denarius also symbolizes the new incorruptible nature of man, which all the righteous will be clothed with at the Second Coming.

Jesus also assured us that in His Father's house there are many mansions, which are being prepared for us to become our eternal property. John 14:2. It's hard to imagine what this will look like, but definitely this will be some kind of material gift from the Lord, which will belong only to the one to whom it will be given. When planning these mansions, the Lord takes into account our tastes, our temperament, social status, love of nature and open space and much more. I think we will not be disappointed, and a more beautiful neighbor's house will not cause envy and disappointment in us.

When my daughter just began to speak and understand the meaning of words, then I told her that in Heaven her own dwelling is being prepared for her, in which many different animals will live, and she will be able to play with them. She liked this idea so much that she gained a lively interest in the Owner of this construction. She fell in love with such a God Who is so generous to little children and thought everything through for their happiness. But over the years the material world filled my daughter's imagination, and she no longer so enthusiastically perceived information about the future reward.

And how do you, friends, see what is promised to you by God? What attracts you more in Eternity, eternal treasures or the Owner of these treasures, gifts or the Giver? I know your answer, but only God knows how honest it is.

When raising children, we cannot avoid the situation when some of their labor and successful result should be marked by some special reward. Here the special wisdom of parents is needed so that the reward does not become the goal, but is an addition to the joy for the work done.

Promising something for good behavior, it's worth thinking about whether such encouragement will bring benefit. It's always easier to give some sweetness than to conduct explanatory conversations with the child and delve into solving the problem with his behavior. It's important to teach children that the struggle with sin should be carried out not for a reward, but because sin is evil that needs to be eradicated from life for the sake of truth. It's important to convey to children

that it's necessary to love truth for the sake of truth itself, and household duties must be performed for the good of the whole family.

While the child is very small, takes first steps and makes first attempts to perform some tasks, he very much needs encouragement, a reward for his efforts. He learns to walk not because a surprise awaits him for this, but because everyone does this. And who among you will praise an adult son for walking? But first steps and first small deeds need special evaluation and encouragement from parents and other family members. And when this learning process is launched, then higher goals should be set.

Monetary reward is a special type of encouragement that needs a delicate and wise approach at a certain time and in certain cases. Money is a direct competitor to God's grace, and therefore it's worth understanding their influence on the child's mind, and in the first years of life they need to be kept away from methods of stimulation and education.

To extract benefit or joy from correct behavior are two opposite directions of life. Inappropriate or thoughtless reward can very quickly change the child's way of thinking, and then it will be difficult to correct or change something. A sense of duty from principle is formed by years of persistent efforts and instructions, while carnal inclinations do not need time and special classes. They quietly wait for their hour to drown out all the good that a person has been taught, if they are released from control.

Christianity is beautiful in that the very process of personality and character formation in the likeness of God is the best event of all life, in the process of which amazing changes of worldview and understanding occur. Feelings and thoughts undergo radical transformations, and the power of the Holy Spirit brings abundant fruit, which decorates and gladdens the heart.

I know what life looks like with God and without Him. And living righteously, I already receive a priceless reward for a

better life in this world, which surpasses all worldly goods and grants the heart to experience the happiness of Eternal life already now. And even if it all ends here without continuation, I will say that life with God is much better and more interesting than without Him. But I believe that there is a continuation outside this perishable world, where it will be even better. But now I am gladdened by the very process of life with Jesus and growing in Him. Even if I lose everything material in this life, no one can steal the spiritual wealth of the soul from me. It is hidden in Christ and stored in Heaven. And in the Heavenly reward, I am more interested not in the house, but in whether I will see God's throne from my window, whether I will be able to sit at Jesus' feet. I am also interested in which of you, friends, will be my neighbors.

For children, that reward is good which they do not expect, but they guess that you are generous with surprises and will certainly show your love in some special action that will make them very happy. If your children are more interested in you and your presence, then all your rewards will be a pleasant addition to you. They will be accepted with joy and understanding.

Love knows how to give rewards out of love, out of understanding the child's needs and requirements, from the perspective of developing his righteous character. It befriends wisdom and hides many pleasant surprises for children.

Questions for Reflection

1. Please read Prov. 11:18; Matt. 5:11-12; 10:41-42; Luke 6:22-23,35; Gen. 15:1; Ps. 18:8-12; 126:3; Isa. 40:10-11; 49:4; 62:11; 1 Cor. 3:14, in light of this chapter.
2. What other verses from the Bible came to your mind?
3. What did you understand from this chapter?
4. What is a reward?
5. What kinds of rewards or remunerations can there be for children?
6. Why is special wisdom from above needed when encouraging a child?

7. Can a child's character be spoiled by inappropriate rewards?
If yes, how does this look in practice?
8. Should one, when setting goals before a child and announcing a reward for achievement, understand what motive drives him?
9. Why is it necessary to be extremely wise and careful with monetary reward for children?
10. How can and should a child be encouraged so that he is more interested not in the reward, but in the path to the goal?
11. What to do if my children are already spoiled and don't want to do anything without encouragement?
12. What kind of reward can be called wise? Give several examples.
13. What happens in your heart when you hear what reward the Lord is preparing for you?
14. Are you interested in doing something if no one evaluates your work in any way?