

RESPONSIBILITIES OF GODLY PARENTS

Preached by Rev. T. G. Oshokoya
on May 16, 1982



The points in the Sunday school lesson — **The Responsibilities of Godly Parents** — that we studied this morning were thoroughly explained. It gives me much pleasure and joy to bring up the same topic in all its fullness to this assembly. The abandonment of parental responsibilities in the home is the major cause of problems in the nations of the world today, and in our own country. It is this fundamental problem that God wants to use this sermon to correct.

This Church as an organisation caters for the good of all and wishes that what has gone wrong in each individual's life be corrected. Earlier on, this same teaching was taught to about eight thousand people comprising students, teachers, professionals, the young and the old. The message has been carried everywhere, not only in Nigeria, but to other countries of the world, particularly in Africa.

The Apostolic Faith disseminates the sound doctrine, which corrects the things that have gone wrong in the lives of people. This correction concerns everyone. The politicians, the educated and the illiterates are all getting more and more corrupted each day. The situation is so bad that many people are making efforts and designing measures by which the ills can be corrected, but it is a pity that the measures proffered are ineffective.

Recently, one of the ministers in this organisation, who came from a state in Nigeria, directed my attention to a newspaper item, where the Attorney General and Commissioner of Justice in that state was urged to counsel people on how corruption could be corrected in the institutions of learning, and particularly among the youths. This is an indication that those at the helm of affairs in government are aware of the corruption and evils that are going on in the land. The heights people are striving to attain, to lead a life of holiness, is what God gives to us free of cost in this organisation. It is the desire of this Church that the people will know the Truth. This is why the Church makes various arrangements to reach people in their different groups. To achieve this, it organises seminars, workshops and Bible teachings, so that the Bible will be used as a yardstick to rule the quarters, villages, towns and the states. God has spoken to us about the responsibilities of parents. The responsibilities are not what the ungodly parents who do not believe in God can do.

There are many parents in this assembly and very soon, those who are children now, will become parents, and the cycle will continue like that. The parents whose hearts and souls have been changed through the power of the Word of God, who have partaken of the Word, and have passed it on to their children are the ones who can effectively discharge their responsibilities.

Many are the parents who do not believe in God, and do not obey Him. Such parents give birth to children, take care of them, pamper and send them to school, so that the children can have a bright and good future. Many times, the money they spend on the children lead the children into trouble. Many of such children have developed attitudes that may make them have no consideration for their parents again even till the day of their death. Yet, the pride of such parents is that they have discharged their responsibility to their children by sending them to highly esteemed schools.

They overlook the instructions of God, and do not bother to expose their children to the Word of God. The ministers of God at The Apostolic Faith Church have not failed to disseminate the Truth since the inception of the Church.

**"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:
"And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7).**

This is the beginning of the instructions God gave to parents. and it is the foundation of the responsibilities that God committed to their charge. They must teach the children all the Word of God; all the principles, precepts, and testimonies that God had set up for them. It must be in their hearts, and always remain there. They should remember it, continue to read and to study it.

God told Joshua to meditate on the Word day and night. He would prosper if he did not set aside the Word of God, nor turn from it to the right hand or to the left, and if he kept it with all diligence in his heart.

"And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:7).

My friend, this is the duty you owe your children; the children whom God has given you. This is what God has commanded each Bible Christian to do. He does not say, you should only breastfeed or feed the child; those are basic needs. On the contrary, He says the Word which He has given you, should be used to train your children. He says you should talk to them about it, morning, noon and night, because the Word will make their lives beautiful. This is to say that the Word is sufficient for all their needs. It would remould, establish, guide, lead them in all circumstances of life, sharpen their brains, be a shield for them and make them victors. The Word will teach them how to live in humility, make them respect their parents and even the elders.

Maybe. you have never heard this before, God has made you fortunate to hear it this morning. It is possible you have heard it before, but have not been practising it. As you hear it again this morning, it will be a reminder to you. Many people in the world are dying, and going to a lost eternity. This loss is not peculiar to the black race; it is universal. We owe the people an obligation, from this morning on, to declare to them that the Lord can mend their homes and ways.

But for you who have been in this Church for a long time, who have been hearing the Word over and again, who have given birth to children who today have become mothers or fathers, yet have not applied the teachings, God wants you to consider doing so today.

Some children who were born into this Gospel are already in the snare of the fowler. Many of them have become thugs. We plead with them to repent, but they refuse to do so! The Church could not tame them, nor have control over them. We are still praying for them.

The Church has suffered a lot of losses because many parents failed to accept the Word in its entirety, and act on it as they should. It has suffered the loss of the services of many of its bona lide children, male and female, just because a mother or father found it difficult to enforce the Word of God that would have made them accept the Gospel. Many children who would have become Gospel workers have gone out into the world. We have lost many Sunday school teachers, ministers, choristers, instrumentalists, and organists. Some others remain in the congregation up to date but the positions that they ought to fill, are vacant. They failed to occupy them. Why?

They do not have the fire of God in their hearts.

Many of the children who were born in, or brought into the Gospel, have failed to repent because parents have not fulfilled their responsibility of teaching them the Word of God, and standing firm to see that their children repent and belong to God. If children would not repent and would not want to serve God, parents ought to be on God's side with prayers and tears. God's hands would be heavy on such children, and they would seek God by all means. But because of the slackness with which the parents handle these children, today, such children are useful to the world, and the devil. Many of them have become great executives, business tycoons, but they are separated from God. This is a major loss to the Church of God, to the parents, and to God.

Let us consider it, what should be the joy of the parents, the position the children hold in the world or the one they hold in the Church carrying the torch of the Gospel?

When these children do not have the sound doctrine which God says parents should plant in their hearts, what will they hand- over to their own children? Is the generation dying or flourishing in the faith? Consider it.

In like manner, the Bible Christians owe the world of sinners a responsibility. We owe it a responsibility to pray for sinners, from this moment on, to make sure that they become what God wants them to be, so that the nation may be peaceful, prosperous, and that they may live acceptable lives before God. When sinners accept the call of God, Christians too enjoy their lives. Today, all of us, both old and young, cannot walk peacefully on the highways. Many have built houses, but are afraid to live in them because of burglars and armed robbers, lest they break in on them. Many have their cars snatched while on their way to the work places. It is true that you are not a thief, but the thieves will not allow you to move peacefully on the road; they will not allow you enjoy in your house. Where then is the peace? Where is the rest of mind? That is not all: it may be that your own child has taken cover under the company of the thieves! Evil communications corrupt good manners. When will this evil not continue to multiply from generation to generation? We owe this nation a duty; we must pray for the peace of our country. Armed robbers have set up their associations and have extended them to higher institutions of learning. If you have a child in a higher institution, who you have not stuffed with the Word of God, what kind of association do you know he will join?

Nowadays, it has become an easy matter for young boys and girls to eagerly seek after money. A little amount of money is no longer able to achieve much for them. Consequently, the crave for money is high. People find it difficult to depend on only one job. One who is a teacher goes for another business as soon as he closes in the school, instead of going home to take care of the children. The child at home does not see the mother, the husband also does not know his wife's whereabouts. The husband too goes in 'search of money instead of returning home in time. The money amassed will not become the Word of God in the hearts of the children, and will not be the good example they need. They don't even have time for the Word of God and prayer. How will the Spirit of God abound in a heart which does not read the Word of God, and does not pray? How will it be possible for you to teach your child the Word? You seek after money all the time, and multiply the number of children, how will the home not become ruined? If the home is ruined, what becomes of the community and society? How will the Church itself not become corrupt?

Lack of godly parenting is the disease plaguing the world: the nation finds it incurable; no solution has been found for it. It is incurable, because people do not want to return to the Word of God. It is equally incurable for one who goes to church but disregards the Word of God, and does not take it seriously. The way out of this menace is presented to you this morning. People complain, "My child does not do what God wants. He does not take care of me. He does not take care of the home. He is disobedient, he takes Indian hemp, he is stubborn, he is a drunkard." The list is endless. If you make room for the Word of God in your heart, you will experience a drastic change.

Maybe you think, "If I extend the Word of God to him, he would not take it, if I preach to him,

he would not listen." This is not true. If you yourself take the Bible as the genuine Word of God, apply your heart to it, follow all its precepts, and call upon God, God will do it. He will answer your prayer.

There may be in this assembly, one who has come with her unbelieving husband. She accepts the Word of God sincerely, and God refreshes her with the Word, but her husband does not believe the Word of God, neither does he even want it. She may be surprised that God has not changed him. It is not that God cannot do it, it is that woman who should consecrate more. Paul says, 'If you have an unbelieving husband or wife, and you as a Christian can live with him or her, the Law of God does not forbid it.' But he says, 'Who can say, maybe through you (through your own consecration, through yielding your heart altogether to God in all the ways that God expects) your wife or husband can be sanctified?' Peter confirmed that Sarah did that, with the ornament hidden in the heart and not with the outward adorning. She was in total subjection to the living God, and to her husband, to the extent that she called him lord. He says, 'If you too can have such an attitude and love, your husband or wife who does not believe in God, nor desire His love, will change.' The Word of God has not changed; it is you who have not reached the standard that God demands. God never fails. That adorning of the heart, which God required of women in the Bible days, is the same ornament with which He expects men and women to adorn themselves today. If a man or woman can humble himself before the Living God, allow Him to dwell in his heart, believe, and dig deep with the Living God, he will experience the change. There is nothing too hard for God to do; the God Who does the impossible, will do wonders for you.

Many are praying for the conversion of their people; God will convert them. Paul said he prayed for Timothy on his knees with tears. Yes, that is what we should do also. The love for the Israelites was what burdened Moses when he was pleading for them, after they backslid and started to worship idol. God said He would destroy them, but Moses said rather than that, he would substitute his own soul for theirs. Was that easy? No. Was that a snapshot prayer? No. It was the perfect love of God in his heart and his digging deep with God, that caused him to pray like that. If we can do that over each person we want God to convert, God will do the same for us.

Some parents, because of the love they have for their children, push them into the work of God. It is true that parents can do that in order to encourage them to serve God. They can also spend every valuable thing they have on the children in order to keep them in God's work. If the children do not give room to the Word of God in their hearts, exercise more zeal than the parents have, meditate on the Word, continue to study it, and be very prayerful, that blessing will not be theirs.

My sister, you know how many losses of children you have had; children who are not dead, but who are not with Jesus. You know you have been a little careless with them, and that you have not pushed them into the Word of God as much as you have pushed them into the world. There is room for you today to make amends. Brother, you know the precious souls and lives which God has committed to your care. They possibly would have become ministers, Sunday school teachers, organists, trumpeters, bearers of the Torch of God concerning the sound doctrine. But through your letting God down a little, and your failure to push them into the Gospel with a firm decision, you have directed them into the world. Since they are not yet dead, there is still another chance for you. You can rush to the Living God in prayer, so that such children can be sought and brought back to God.

There are relations, friends, or children for whose sake we should draw close to God on the altar, and lay down our lives that by all means, God should help us search them out. Even you, who do not yet have a family, the country Nigeria is your responsibility. A single person, Martin Luther, consecrated his life to God before the old-time faith of the Gospel could be restored in his time. You too can do the same today. You owe God that responsibility.

Preachers and teachers have expounded the Word. It had burdened them, and they have passed the burden to you, as it were. Each of us will give an account before the judgment throne of

God about the things committed to our care. Now that God has shown you your responsibilities, come and dig deep with God in prayer, so that the blessing of God may be yours.