

TEACHING GOAL

To study Christian education as an application of the fifth commandment.

DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

- Q. What is required in the fifth commandment?
- A. The fifth commandment requires the preserving the honor, and performing the duties, belonging to every one in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals.
- Q. What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?
- A. The fifth commandment forbids the neglecting of , or doing anything against, the honor and duty which belongs to every one in their several places and relations.

S.C. 64-65, L.C. 124-132, W.C. of F. XIX, Savoy 19, Young 92

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Study Passage: Psalm 78

Support Passages: Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 119:97-104; Proverbs 22:6; Matthew 7:6-12; Ephesians 6:1-4; II Timothy 3:12-17

BIBLE STORY

I Samuel 2:12-17, 22-36, 3:12-13; Eli raises his children im-properly.

MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

Matthew 7:6

6 "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.

APPLICATION

The people of God have a special duty to train up their children in the way they should go. That our children not be like the sons of Ephraim who turned back in the day of battle we must be especially diligent in this matter.

SUMMARY

As we have learned, the fifth commandment applies to a wide range of relationships which exist between superiors, equals and inferiors. Incidentally, this terminology only refers to one's social position, for example, father to son or employer to employee. It does not refer to one's spiritual position, for, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."¹ Because the subject is so large we shall undertake the study of only two applications albeit very important ones. In this lesson we shall deal with Christian Education and the next lesson will undertake the study of the church state relationship.

In his commentary on the fifth commandment, Paul writes, "And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."² Having applied the commandment to the child - parent relationship the apostle now gives attention to duty the parent has to the child, namely, that of instruction. But does this refer to more than Sunday School or family devotions? Indeed it does! If any part of the daily instruction received by our children confuses them with regard to the True and Living God, or encourages them toward humanism or evil then that part of their education does not qualify as the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

In fact, all that we come to know is to be filtered through the precepts of the Lord according to the Bible, where we read, "From Thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way."³ Furthermore, it is abundantly clear that we are to engage in daily Christian education. Moses writes concerning the sum total of God's Law, "you shall teach them diligently to your sons and you shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up."⁴ The Hebrew word translated "diligently" means to whet or sharpen. Therefore we are to teach God's precepts to our children trenchantly or incisively and we are to do it on a daily basis. The verse refers to activities that are done on a daily basis such as sitting in the house, lying down, and rising up.

If we, by reason of employment among other things, cannot teach our children on a daily basis when we are obligated to hire someone else to do it in our place. We cannot expect the ungodly to teach God's precepts to our children. Furthermore those who teach in our place must be able to relate all areas of knowledge to the precepts of God else it cannot be said that through the precepts of God we get understanding.

Now the scriptures speak of the ungodly in very strong terms. Jesus, in fact,

calls them "kuon" (Greek) or "dogs".⁵ In the non-literal sense these are unbaptized and therefore impure people. Paul uses the word in this sense in another passage, "Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers..."⁶ Jesus would not have us give our children (pearls) to ungodly teachers. When our son asks for a loaf will we give him a stone? If he asks for a fish will we give him a snake? Many children cry out to us for answers and godly instruction but all too often we give them stones and snakes. We instruct them with humanism.

The fathers of Israel were to teach the testimony in Jacob and the law in Israel to their children, "that the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, that they may arise and tell them to their children, that they should put their confidence in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments."⁷ They miserably failed in this duty. We read that Ephraim turned back in the day of battle because they were not properly taught. Eli, too, was culpable and was punished, "because his sons brought a curse on themselves and he (Eli) did not rebuke them."⁸

One of our greatest responsibilities as parents is to bring up our children to know and love the Lord. May God grant us the grace, resources and spiritual strength to provide daily Christian education for our children.

¹ Galatians 3:28

² Ephesians 6:4

³ Psalm 119:104

⁴ Deuteronomy 6:7

⁵ Matthew 7:6

⁶ Philippians 3:2

⁷ Matthew 7:9-10

⁸ Psalm 72:5-7

⁹ I Samuel 3:13