

(John 21:15-17, NIV84)

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

As a father I recall how each of my children responded to discipline. One might have needed a spanking, while another would have crumbled under the weight of a disapproving look. And yet, each of them needed loving discipline.

Consider the apostle Peter. He had denied Jesus three times, and when he heard the rooster crow that second time he was reminded of what Jesus had warned him: "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me thrice." Peter then went out and wept bitterly. Given that fact, it may seem like Jesus is piling on; Peter denied Him three times, and so three times Jesus asks Peter: "Do you love me." Someone might have asked Jesus: "Doesn't Peter feel bad enough already; why remind him of his miserable failure?"

Sometimes when we discipline our children it may seem like we're pouring salt on an open wound, but remember the purpose of pouring salt on a wound. It hurts like crazy, but it is to cleanse the wound and promote healing. We don't do our children any favors by withholding our discipline because "they've suffered enough already." Instead, in love, discipline your children. Remind them that their sins carry consequences, but then assure them of God's forgiveness and your forgiveness, of God's love and your love.

God's child in Christ with you,
Pastor Golm

August 27

God's Word-to Christian Parents

Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Ephesians 6:4

The Bible speaks clearly of the primary duties of Christian parents. They

are, of course, to provide for the physical needs of their children-such as food, clothing, and shelter. But more important, the Lord holds them responsible for the spiritual "nurture and admonition" of each child God gives them.

For the word "nurture" we might substitute the word "feed" as it is used in Christ's command to Peter: "Feed My lambs." Christian parents are to lead their children to the green pastures of God's Word where they will learn of the love of the Savior, and also learn to "love him back". In this important task, Christian parents will enlist the aid of others, such as pastors and church school teachers.

The Greek word for "admonition" may be translated "discipline" or "correction". While Christian parents will love their children, they will also discipline and correct them. They will not be soft in the face of repeated, stubborn misbehavior.

As the Lord's representatives, theirs is the sometimes difficult duty to discipline-not in anger, but in love; not to show who's boss, but to show what the will of the Lord is. Let the love of Christ motivate both father and mother in everything they say or do.

We are living in an age of growing permissiveness. To the extent that this is a reaction to some of the harsh and loveless authoritarianism of the past, it may claim a degree of justification. But this does not alter the divine command. Our Lord does not say: "let them go"; he says: "bring them up". And this requires both loving nurture and loving admonition.

O blest the parents who give heed
Unto their children's foremost need,
And weary not of care or cost!
May none to them and heaven be lost.

(Devotion from: Daily Walk With God - Meditations for Every Day, by Herman W. Gockel)