



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

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## Restraint & Training

Children will push against any limits set against them. Call it testing the waters to see what they can and cannot get away with but they will test your skills as a parent. It begins at a very early age. A young child gets ahold of something they know they should not have; the parent walks in the room and the child jumps in surprise knowing they have been caught. They drop the object and immediately start crying.

Those are the easy days. Little children soon grow up and the limits and rules that are laid down for a teenager become more important than ever because the consequences of disobedience become far greater. What was once the disobedient act of a child is now the transgression of God's law. (1 John 3:4) i.e. sexual immorality, filthy language, drunkenness, theft, drug usage. The wage of any sin is death. (Romans 6:23) Sins committed in our youth can haunt us for a life-time. It becomes the work of a parent to guide the child, discipline and instruct the child, set curfews and limits for the child. In other words, a parent must restrain a child.

Proverbs 22:15a says, "foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child". This is not an insult cast against a child, it is just the truth. Children lack knowledge, experience, and discernment which are the skills that are necessary to determine right and wrong. (Hebrews 5:14) Because these skills are lacking, foolishness resides in the heart of a child. The passage goes on to say that "the rod of correction will drive it far from him." (Proverbs 22:15b) Parents discipline their children to correct wrong behavior. They begin by using the rod but then as they gain more privileges a parent may take away their use of the car or the use of their cell phone or computer to correct what has been done wrong. Failing to do so only allows them to grow up bearing no consequence for their actions. "The rod and rebuke give wisdom, But a child left *to himself* brings shame to his mother." Proverbs 29:15

Children who are not restrained grow up having no respect or concern for the things of the LORD. There is the story revealed in Scripture of the sons of Eli the priest. (1 Samuel 2:12-17) They were corrupt and "abhorred the offerings of the LORD." (17) They had become so vile they would "lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. (1 Samuel 2:22) Did they just wake up one morning this way? No the Bible tells us that Eli knew what his sons were up to. (1 Samuel 3:3) The LORD's charge against him is that "his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them." (3) Eli could have and should have removed them from their office. They were so wicked but he did nothing about it. He was weak against them when he should have been strong. What else had they done in their much younger days that Eli had not restrained?

Parents also train their children. One aspect of training a child is to provide the skills that are necessary to be productive and useful. Growing up we had rules and we had chores. Chores taught us the law of reward and punishment. If we completed our weekly chores we were rewarded with an allowance. If we did not, we were punished or docked a portion of our allowance. In the 70's when baseball cards were really taking off, you needed all the allowance you could get. Money wasn't just handed to us, we were taught the value of work. (Consider the many Scriptures against laziness – Proverbs 10:26, 13:4, 19:24, 21:25, 26:14) Children must grow up to be productive citizens. "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." 1 Timothy 5:8 They must be trained to develop the skills of honest labor.

The restraint and training of a child has been unsuccessful if they grow up and do not serve the Lord. The primary goal of the parent is to teach them restraint because the LORD's word does have restrictions. "And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4) A child,

who is learning to be productive, is really being trained to be productive in their labors for the LORD. A child who is being restrained is being taught the importance of remembering their Creator in the days of their youth. Ecclesiastes 12:1)

We want our children to receive eternal life with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We do not want them to be cast out from the presence of God into everlasting punishment. May the LORD bless parents with the strength to restrain and the wisdom to train our children. Our heart's desire is that each and every one of them might be saved.

STACY

## Tolerating Black Shoes

- by Robert F. Turner

I like brown shoes and wear them most of the time. However, if you insist upon wearing black shoes, I will not argue the point. Go right ahead! I'm a very tolerant man with respect to shoes.

But some of my friends tell me I am intolerant in religious matters. They just can't understand why a kindhearted, tolerant fellow like me would say that they *must* obey God's commands and practice in religion *only* that which God has authorized. (Well, maybe that is the way they put it.) Sometimes they find it difficult to tolerate my intolerance.

Some intolerance is born of egotism - the product of self-centered individuals who think they are the center of the universe, and that their ways must be accepted by all. This is very bad (Jas. 4:11-12).

And there is an intolerance of sort, which is born of love. I love my granddaughter and insist that she not eat the shoe polish (the brown, that is). I can't bring myself to be unconcerned about this matter.

And there is an intolerance born of respect for authority and deep concern for those who fail to respect the divine will. Paul contended with the Israelites frequently because (a) he loved them, and (b) he knew they could not be saved while they followed their own erroneous ways. Paul's convictions, and his concern for men, made him seem intolerant (Rom. 10:1ff).

People who really *believe* something - strongly enough to work for it, teach it, and practice it - are often called "narrow" or "bigoted." Meanwhile, the shallow-thinking, crowd-following, spineless fellow is likely to mistake his own lack of conviction for broadmindedness and congratulate himself for being such a wonderful person.

It is well and good to be tolerant in matters of indifference - where the rights of men are equal. But to tolerate sin and transgression of God's law is to assume the right to judge that law (Jas. 2:9ff), or to relegate divine matters to the category of black and brown shoes.

In the final analysis, tolerance is often a disguise for the lack of conviction and concern. In their liberal attitude toward shoe colors, men forget to prepare for a robe and a crown.