

PRESBYTERIANISM

The Presbyterian Church recognizes the leadership of elders, the presbyters.

The church recognizes two types of elders

1. Teaching elder- ordained ministers
2. Ruling elders- district leadership- administrative

The church recognizes two types of membership

1. Full member- both baptized and confirmed
2. Adherents- may be baptized only or not

The church recognized two sacraments

1. Baptism
2. Holy Communion

COURTS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Presbyterian church has three administrative governing courts.

1. THE KIRK SESSION

Made up of the parish minister and all the elders under that parish. One of the elders is chosen to take the minutes prepare the agendas and handle all the correspondences on behalf of the session - the **session clerk**.

DUTIES OF THE KIRK SESSION

1. Admission to membership – receiving and giving transfers. Those willing are taken through the catechumen instructions.
2. Keeping records of baptism, confirmations, deaths, wedding.

3. Evangelism

4. Christian conduct and discipline.

2. THE PRESBYTERY

Responsible for the pastoral and administrative work of the parishes under its jurisdiction. Its made up of all the parish ministers and their pairing elders and the two parish group leaders – chair and secretary.

A moderator is chosen annually to chair and moderate meetings among the ministers. Also chosen among the presbytery members is a secretary to take minutes and prepare the agendas is the **presbytery clerk**.

DUTIES OF THE PRESBYTERY

1. Preaching of the word accurately.

2. Sacraments being administered rightly and the records well maintained.

3. Interviewing and assisting those wishing to join the full time ministry.

4. Filling vacant parishes within its jurisdiction.

5. Forming and dissolution of parishes.

6. Ordination of ministers and elders

7. Discipline

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Supreme Court of the church

Made up of equal number of representative ministers and elders from each presbytery and the departmental heads of the church.

Meets once in three years, the moderator is chosen who oversees the affairs of the church for three years - One term - can be reelected for another term but cant exceed two terms. In between the three years the General Administrative Council oversees the running of the church and addressing matters that cant wait for the General Assembly.

COMMITTEES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

- ❖ Training and personnel
- ❖ Selection and training of ministers
- ❖ Further training for the personnel
- ❖ Training of the evangelists
- ❖ Lay training
- ❖ Development of church literature

2. Youth

3. Men's fellowship

4. Woman's guild

5. Church School

6. Health board

7. Justice and reconciliation

8. Evangelism

9. Christian education

10. Boys and Brigade

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

- ❖ Church leaders and members who live in disobedience or violation of church ethics are subjected to discipline through the relevant church administrative courts.

- ❖ The objective of discipline is to lovingly restore the fellow believer into a proper relationship with Christ and fellow believers.

CATEGORIES OF OFFENCES

1. Offences against the society – stealing – against the law of the state
2. Heresy – against the church doctrine and traditions.
3. Scandals

THE PROCESS OF DISCIPLINE

1. Counseling
2. Admonition
3. Rebuke
4. Suspension from church privileges
5. Removal from the communion roll
4. Excommunication

DEFINITION OF TERMS

DISTRICT – An geographical area in the Presbyterian church with Presbyterian members under the leadership of an elder.

ELDER – A Presbyterian full member ordained for district leadership.

DUTIES OF AN ELDER

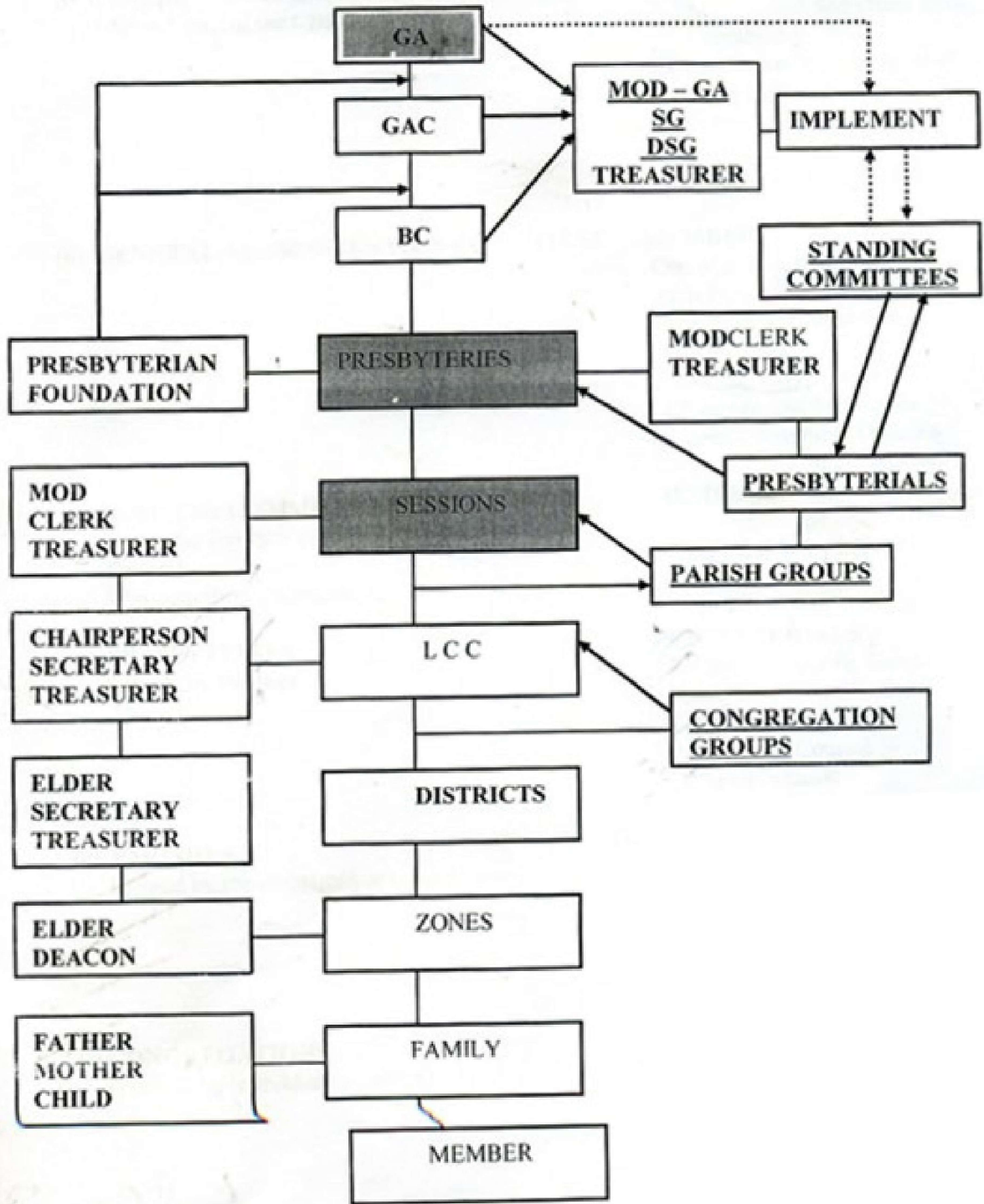
- ❖ District pastoral care
- ❖ Preparation and administration of the holy communion
- ❖ Administration

Deacon – A Presbyterian full member chosen at the district level to help the elder in district leadership.

DUTIES OF A DEACON

1. Collecting and registering the collections.
2. Stewardship of church properties and general cleanliness.

PCEA ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE



THE APOSTLES CREED -THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR FAITH

- ❖ When one is introduced to a stranger, one realizes that it's the beginning of a new relationship. You can learn the name, little by little about the person, if you wish to be acquitted with the person for long term, and then you'll need to spend more time in conversation and fellowship. It may take a lifelong process of learning to deeply understand.
- ❖ Creed is a Latin word credo meaning " I believe"
- ❖ After baptism we are introduced to God and the above experience is a typical example of the experience of a desire of a Christian with a deeper desire to deeply know God.
- ❖ The apostle's creed is a statement of basic doctrines. It was recited as a statement of faith by the first Christians century for those being baptized.
- ❖ It acted as a checklist of beliefs of individuals being formally inducted into the fellowship of the church.
- ❖ As part of heritage understanding and belief incorporate four elements
 - A. Scripture – cornerstone and foundation
 - B. Traditions – Doing of the Christian church
 - C. Reason – mind ,intellect
 - D. Experience –matters of the heart

PILLARS OF THE APOSTLES CREED

1. God, the father, creator
2. Jesus Christ, his only son our lord

3. The Holy Spirit
4. The Holy Catholic Church – military and triumphant.

I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY

- ❖ What is faith – A personal belief and trust in the LOVE and power of God? - That which affects our lives and the lives of others.

Faith – involves – Biblical based knowledge Gal 1;23, eph 4;6, jude3 – The Head

- Personal experience of believing or knowing the truth – an experience with God. -heart
 - Heb 11;1 – Faith is assurance is things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen
- ❖ When we form an experience with God, we naturally form a structure of faith – after a critical examination and reflection which brings forth logical conclusions that form the framework of ones faith.

God - Almighty lk 18;27, lk 1;27

- Omnipresent – everywhere – ps 139
- Omniscient – all knowing
- Personal – he thinks , feels and responds to his creation Rom 8;15 – he’s abba father
- Ruler of all things
- Source of all power
- Has given us freedom to choose

- ❖ *The creator* – This is a revelation – A revelation is a process by which God makes himself known to humankind – Job 32;8
- 1. General revelation – nature Rom 1;19-20, ps 19;1 – heavens are telling the glory of God, the firmament proclaims his handiwork.
- 2. Special revelation – in the person of Jesus Christ

AND I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST HIS ONLY SON OUR LORD

- ❖ An essential characteristic of the Christian faith is that it is not a construction of the human mind, ethical system or a philosophy. It is an intellectual and a heartfelt agreement with the historical facts of the faith.
- ❖ Christianity is the religion of the incarnation. The creator of the universe of the world united Himself to his handiwork through the person of Jesus Christ. God came to us in our situation and condition and dwelt amongst us.
- ❖ Yielding to the historical events concerning Jesus Christ is fine but believing, yielding our lives to him as a sign of personal faith in what God has done.
- ❖ Rm 10:17 – We are saved through faith that comes through hearing the word of God.
- ❖ Goal of the gospels was to give a biography of Jesus life, main being winning converts to the faith through the character, teaching, birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- ❖ 1jn 1;14 – the word became flesh and dwelt amongst us. – to understand this analogy we can borrow from some missionaries doing mission in a foreign land, where they live and work among the nationals adopting their lifestyles. By living as nationals, they gain acceptance and credibility with the locals. The missionaries don't lose their citizenship nor their knowledge and appreciation of their homeland and its their familiar style of life.

- ❖ Lk 1;34-35 – how can they be, I have no husband and the angel said to her, the Holy Spirit will come upon you the power of the most high will overshadow you, therefore the child that will be born will be called holy, the son of God.
- ❖ This passage accounts for Jesus divinity and humanity combined in one body. From Mary he took humanity and from God full divinity.
- ❖ The virgin birth provides the desperately needed break from the natural law of course/ effect carries forward the sinful heritage of the race.
- ❖ Is 53;4-5 – The prophet Isaiah states; surely he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows..... for our transgression, bruised for our iniquities.
- ❖ The resurrection of our Lord Jesus provides a confident hope for eternal life. Death is not the end for those faith.

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

- ❖ Is the working agent of God in the world - carries out the work of God in time and space.
- ❖ He furnishes the Christian with tools – spiritual and moral strength –power and guidance. Jn 14;15-17, 16;7, acts 1;5,8
- ❖ Equips us for different tasks for the work of the ministry.

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH

- ❖ The Christian faith has both personal and cooperate dimensions, God does work on our lives both from the personal point of view and the members of his church – individual and cooperate worship.
- ❖ Acts of worship includes;

1. Personal devotion

2. Morality

3. Public worship
4. Fellowship with believers
5. Study of the bible
6. Preaching, witnessing, mission work
7. Partaking of the sacraments.

❖ **Marks of the church**

1. One – eph 4; 4-6
2. Holy – eph 3;3-6, 9-11, 1ptr 2;9
3. Catholic – universal – heavenly church - victorious

- Worldly – militant – fighting against – world, Satan, sin.

4. Apostolic – continuity of the gospel.

I BELIEVE IN THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

- ❖ The doctrine of grace – undeserved favor – we can't work or toil to earn it. – we are completely dependent n God. God's grace is available to all God seeks each person to respond to him – free will.
- ❖ Faith is responding to Gods offer of Gods offer of forgiveness and a new life to the sinner who repents Rom 10;17, col3;3-4, 11, 1cor12;3

HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD, THE RESURRECTION OF TH BODY AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING

- ❖ The hope of glory. Paul in Rom 8;24-25 says for in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is not seen is not hope, for who hopes for what he sees, but we hope for what we do not see we wait for it with patience. –

- ❖ 1. Express hope
- 2. Expect faith
- 3. Prospect faith
- ❖ Eternal life is the everlasting fellowship with God. It a quality of life endless a present gift that we are joined to God in faith.
- ❖ The bible is consistent in teaching that judgment is both present and future. When the believer cooperates with the Holy Spirit one opens the door to a more vital relationship with God. Continual refusal to cooperate with God results in the hardening of the heart that leads to spiritual death.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FINAL JUDGEMENT.

1. Open – all people shall be called to account for their lives, good or bad
2. Final and will seal fates of people either for or against God.Rev 20;15

THE BIBLE

- ❖ The word bible is a greek word biblia meaning a collection of many books.
- ❖ It is the written form of Gods words thoughts and plans to us , given to us through the lips of human beings. Ex 31:18 – and he gave Moses..... Written with the finger of God. Ex 32:16 – and the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was of God, graven upon the tablets.
- ❖ Scripture by which we nourish our spiritual lives. Deut 32:47
- ❖ The writers wrote the bible under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit 2Tim 3:16 –
- ❖ Although the bible is one of the oldest book, yet one of the very modern, in it we find the answers to the three greatest questions about life
 - Where did I come from?
 - Why am I here?
 - Where will I go after my life on earth?

- ❖ The bible has 66 books, 39 in the old and 27 in the new testament.

Testament is a latin word testamentum meaning an agreement, a covenant

An agreement has four critical components

1. Two parties making the agreements
2. Place of the agreement
3. Witness to the agreement
4. Consequences attached.

The Old Testament was an agreement between God and the children of Israel at Mount Sinai through Moses as put in Ex 19:5.... Now if you obey me fully^k and keep my covenant,^l then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession.^m Although the whole earthⁿ is mine, Ex 19:6 you⁴¹ will be for me a kingdom of priests^o and a holy nation.^p These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”

The new agreement was between God and everyone at the cross through Jesus Christ Jn 3:16... Jer 31:31-34 - The time is coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant^d with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

Jer 31:32 It will not be like the covenant^e I made with their forefathers^f when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt,^g because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband^h to them, declares the LORD.

Jer 31:33 “This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their mindsⁱ and write it on their hearts.^j I will be their God, and they will be my people.^k

Jer 31:34 No longer will a man teach^l his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know^m me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO COVENANTS

1. Moses the witness of the old one is a human being, carnal in nature, broke it as everyone did, in the new one, Jesus , divine made even the covenant simpler.
2. The old one is between God and a tribe but the new one accommodates everyone irrespective of all.
3. Old covenant demanded communal punishment if and individual had challenges keeping it , in the new one whoever sins carries individual responsibility.
4. Old covenant e scribbled on a piece of tablet whilst the new one is written in the minds and hearts of the people.

PURPOSES OF GODS WORD TO US.

2tim 3: 15-16 – All the scripture is God breathed for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training unto righteousness..... Living a life of Godliness..... participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by the evil desires 1ptr 3:3,4

1. Word produces life – Jn 6:63 – the words I speak to you are spirit and life. Its creative – by the word everything was created – ps 33;6-9

2. Word cleanses – Jn 15:3, ps 119:9-11 - How can a young man keep his way pure?^j By living according to your word.^k

Ps 119:10 I seek you with all my heart;^l do not let me stray from your commands.^m

Ps 119:11 I have hidden your word in my heartⁿ that I might not sin^o against you.

3. It's the light of our feet – ps 119:105, 2ptr 1:19 – lights this darkened world - Ps 119:105 Your word is a lamp^r to my feet and a light^s for my path.

4. Our spirirtual food – matt 4;4, - Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’¹⁴”^a

5. Aseed – lk 8: 14-15, ps 1:3, 2cor 9:10 - ^{2Co 1:9} Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God,^p who raises the dead.^q

2Co 1:10 He has delivered us from such a deadly peril,^r and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope^s that he will continue to deliver us,

6. A sword – eph 6:17, heb 4:12 - Eph 6:17 Take the helmet of salvation^f and the sword of the Spirit,^g which is the word of God.^h

7. Helps us to pray – jn 15:7, matt 7:24 – 27 - Jn 15:7 If you remain in me^d and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.^e

STRUCTURE OF THE BIBLE

❖ The testament has 39 books, catholic bibles 46 and orthodox 50 books. The testament can be subdivided into four broad categories

1. Pentateuch , torah and the law – Gen , Ex, Lev ,Numb and Deut – creation, fall, calling of the Israelites, and the freedom from bondage in Egypt.

2. Historical - Josh, Ruth, Samuel ½, Kings ½, Chr ½, Ezra,Neh and Esther – Entry into the promised land, settlement, monarchies, division of the kingdoms(Israel and Judah) , exile, return and settlement to Jerusalem and Judea.

3. Prophetic – major – Isaiah, jer , eze,and dan, minor 12 – Hos, joel,amos,obadia, jonah, micah, nahum, hab, Zeph, hagai, lam, zech and malachi

4. Writtings, devotionals and literature – job ,ps, prov, eccl, songs of songs.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

❖ Can be divided into four broad categories

1. Gospels – written testimonies of the life of Jesus Christ, death and resurrection

2. Historical – Birth of the new testament church after Pentecost

3. Epistles, letters – churches – rom, ½ cor, gal, eph, phil, col, ½ thes

Personal – ½ tim, tit,phil, heb

General – jam,1/2/3 jn,1/2 ptr, jude

4. Historical – eschatology – happenings of the end times and final triumph over forces of evil and the devil

GIVING TITHING AND OTHER OFFERINGS

- The word giving brings mixed reactions. Naturally human beings are mean, wants to amass as much as one would.
- God is the author of giving, in Gen 1:29-31, soon after the creation he gave Adam all that he had made.... I gave you all..... He was making all for himself and his purposes but he gave Adam all.
- God gives without strings attached.
- Gen 2:7 after molding soil when working on a human being, he breathed his spirit... he breathed Himself.... He gave us himself..... no wonder he says he made us into his own likeness.
- No one can beat God in giving. John 3:16 – he could have bought us back to himself using silver or gold, goats and cattle.... But he used his own only son.
- Its not a favor we do to God by giving its for our own good.
- We don't give to a poor God.. all we have and ourselves belongs to God.
- It please God when we give, we create a society of equals where nobody suffers lack. Refusing to give creates a society of unequal's, a risk to peace and stability.
- Deut 15: 7-12... God in times of giving refuses the following attitudes.
 - (a) Tight fists
 - (b) Hard heart
 - (c) Mean spirit
- Giving should be free will and generously.2cor 9:6-9... whoever sows sparingly will reap the same. God values a cheerful giver.
- Our attitudes towards giving are taken into account by God in times of giving.
 - (i) Cain and Abel – God accepted one and refused the other.
 - (ii) Ananias and Saphira – Giving costed their lives

BENEFITS OF GIVING – PSALMS 41:1-3

1. V1a – Giving brings joy and happiness to the giver – mean people are never happy, maintains a hard face in case you borrow from them. David in psalms 51:12 asks God of the joy of salvation and a willing spirit.
2. V1b – Giving brings salvation in times of trouble – you always rush to somebody you know in times of trouble. One can withdraw money from a bank one has an account.
3. V2 – Protection for what remains behind – Mal 3:9 – refusing to give is a sure invitation for curses. Adam on eating Gods portion invited all manner of problems.
4. V2b - Giving is a source of prosperity – He shall be blessed upon the earth – the measure you use when giving, when coming back to you shall be shaken, pressed until it overflows. Those who give never lack.
5. V3 – Giving restrains sicknesses, pain and discomfort - The Lord will preserve in times troublesome 3 God promises to restrain the devourer.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TRUE GIVING

1. A sweet smelling sacrifice acceptable to God. Rom 12: 1,2. – We don't give because we have enough, we sacrifice... the Macedonian church of 2Cor 8... gave out of their poverty. So many times our needs are too many but Gods portion should take the first priority.
2. Should not be a duty – giving should be part of us – 1Cor 9 – free will not coercion. Its great honor to give to who owns all including myself. How would it feel to give something to the president and he accepts?
If we would count what God has done to us, what He means to us, we would give liberally.
3. Deut 10:14-18 – Everything belongs to God we own nothing. Withholding anything from the owner is not wisdom and the consequences are not sweet. Buy something for a child and then ask the same child to give, don't we behave thus sometimes?
4. Psalms 96:8 – giving is part of worship – no one should come into the house of worship empty handed. Being a Christian and refusing to give is no worship at all.

TYPES OF GIVING LISTED IN THE BIBLE

1. TITHING – mandatory - Mal 3: 10 – Bring all the tithes – everything one owns has a tithe attached. Mathew 23:23 – even Jesus stressed on the tithe.
2. All the first borns of man and beasts – Deut 15: 19, Numb 18:6, 15
3. All the first fruits – numb 18:13, Deut 18:4 – first salaries, first fruits of a new business, first crops in the farm etc
4. Offerings at the set feasts as required by the law of the land..... law of the church – 2Chronicles 31:3, Numbers 28, 29
5. Vows – Numbers 30 – Hannah vowed – many rarely honor vows
6. Freewill offerings Lev 21 :23 Ezra 3:5
7. 3rd year tithe – Deut 26:12 – anniversaries, birthdays - portions after duration of time
8. Poor, widows, orphans and the alien, strangers – Deut 15 – even traditionally harvesting times some were left in the farm for the listed categories of people.
9. Special projects – Ezra 8: 24-36 Neh 7:70-72 – the church has so many special projects being undertaken

SACRAMENTS

- ❖ God uses different activities within the church to bring blessing to us. All the blessing we experience in this life are observe they are or of grace. 1 ptr5:12b- this is the true grace of God dwell in it.
- ❖ The following is the list of several means of grace that God uses to the believers that they access within the fellowship of the church.
 1. Teaching of the word
 2. Baptism
 3. The lords supper
 4. Prayer for one another

5. Worship
6. Church discipline
7. Giving
8. Spiritual gifts
9. Fellowship
10. Evangelism
11. Personal ministries to individual

- ❖ The word sacrament was used during the roman times to describe the amount of money paid by to people involved in a lawsuit, paid to those responsible for law and order. The person who eventually lost the case would not have his money returned rather it was given to the church for religious purposes eventually it became a right for the church.
- ❖ It was also the oath of royalty taken by the Romans soldiers to the emperor. The link between oath and religious causes meant sacrament eventually became the religious right of the church. In a sacrament we pledge our loyalty to Jesus Christ.
- ❖ The Presbyterian Church recognizes two sacraments.

WHY TWO?

- ❖ They were introduced by Jesus Christ before he left the disciples . Matt 28:19 - go ye to the whole world making people my disciples baptizing them..... lk 22:20 – He broke the bread gave them saying do this....

b. It was a practice of the early church. Acts 2:42 fellowship meals. Acts 2:38.. Those that believed were baptized.

C. circumcision in the Old Testament has a link to Baptism in the New Testament. Passover likewise is likened to the lords' supper in the New Testament. Col 2:11 -, 1cor 5:7, 11:23-25

N.B SACRAMENTS CAN NEVER BE A SUBSTITUTE OF ONES PERSONAL FAITH IN JESUS.

BAPTISM.

- ❖ it is a physical symbol of the death and resurrection of Christ. Baptism denotes the following

1. Purification

- ❖ The outer element used in baptism water speaks to us of washing acts 22:16 get up and are baptized and have your sins washed away..... A picture of a cleansing of the inner conscience from guilt of sins committed

2. Forgiveness

- ❖ Baptism has an idea of repentance and forgiveness mk 1 :4 – turn away from your sins and be baptized and God will forgive your sins. Acts 2:38 – turn away from your sins each one of you and be baptized in the name of Jesus so that your sins will be forgiven

3. Regeneration

- ❖ During baptism the Holy Spirit acts one of the agents. The work of the Holy Spirit in a believer is to bring daily renewal and spiritual rejuvenation-newness.

4. Union with Christ

- ❖ in baptism the candidate identifies with Christ's death and resurrection Rom 6:5 - for since we have become one with him in dying as he died, in the same way we shall be with him in being raised to life as was Gal 3:27 - you were baptized into union with Christ and now you are clothed so to speak with the life of Christ himself.

5. Admission to church

- ❖ The baptized candidates are brought into the family of the believing community, the church.

- ❖ 1Cor 2: 11 – 12... In the same way all of us whether Jew or gentile..... Have been baptized in one body.

6. Sign between man and God

- ❖ Col 2: 11 - 12 baptism is associated with circumcision, which was a covenant between God and Abraham. Hence Christians sees baptism as a covenant. Gal 3:27 - 29....you were baptized into union with Christ..... if you belong to Christians you are descendants of Abraham.

SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM

The Presbyterian Church recognizes two categories of people

- (a) Those with believing profession of faith
- (b) The children of believing parents

MODES OF BAPTISM

- (a) Sprinkling
- (b) Immersion
- (c) Pouring

HOLY COMMUNION

Three intertwined words – Holy, Common, and Union

It is an ordinance done repeatedly by the church as a sign of continual fellowship with Christ.

MEANING OF THE HOLY COMMUNION

1. Christ's death – breaking of the symbolizes the breaking of the body of Christ, when the cup is poured it symbolizes the pouring of the blood of Christ for our sins. We proclaim our participation onto the benefits of Christ's death.

2. Spiritual nourishment

- ❖ one bread is broken into small pieces which we individually pick to denote our affirmation that we belong to the same body of Jesus Christ. It also shows the sign of unity among the body of Christ.

N.B. Great care should be taken and emphasized to and by those who partake of the Holy Communion. Paul rebuked the attitude and manners that the Corinthians Christians had towards this Holy Meal - inconsideration and selfishness – they could take the holy communion until some could be drunk – no wonder he told them eat before the communion – in turn each one of us should partake it in a way that honors Christ – showing the character of Christ that we represent.

THE HOLY TRINITY

- ❖ The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is one of the most important doctrines for the Christian faith.
- ❖ God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Each is fully God.
- ❖ Trinity means three – tri and unity.
- ❖ Gen 1:26 – Then God said, “Let us^o make man^p in our image,^q in our likeness,^r and let them rule^s over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air,^t over the livestock, over all the earth,² and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”
- ❖ Gen 11:7 - Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.
- ❖ Is 6:8 – Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send?^f And who will go for us?^g ”
- ❖ Math 3:16-17 – God Father speaks, God the Son being baptized and the Holy Spirit descends like a dove – As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At

that moment heaven was opened,^q and he saw the Spirit of God^r descending like a dove and lighting on him.

Mt 3:17 And a voice from heaven^s said, "This is my Son,^t whom I love; with him I am well pleased."^u

❖ Mathew 28:19 – baptismal formulae - Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,^g baptizing them in¹²¹ the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,^h

1cor 12:4-6 - There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.ⁱ

2 cor 13:14 - May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,^p and the love of God,^q and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit^r be with you all.

The doctrine of the trinity is a mystery that we may not fully understand, however some practical examples may...

(a) An egg – white, yellow, shell

(b) Time – yesterday, present, future

(c) A married person with a child - father ,son, husband.

1. God is one – the scripture is very clear there is only one God. The teaching God who reveals himself in three personalities.

1Kings 8:60 – so that all the peoples^e of the earth may know that the LORD is God and that there is no other.^f

Is 45:5-6 - I am the LORD, and there is no other;^p apart from me there is no God.^q I will strengthen you,^r though you have not acknowledged me,

Isa 45:6 so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting^s men may know^t there is none besides me.^u I am the LORD, and there is no other.

1Tim 2:5 – For there is one God^f and one mediator^g between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,^h

2. Each personality in the trinity is fully God.

Gen 1:1 – In the beginning^a God created^b the heavens^c and the earth.^d

Jn 1;1-4 - In the beginning was the Word,^a and the Word was with God,^b and the Word was God.^c

Jn 1:2 He was with God in the beginning.^d

Jn 1:3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.^e

Jn 1:4 In him was life,^f and that life was the light^g of men.

Acts 5:3-4 -

IMPORTANCE OF THIS TEACHING

- ❖ Divinity of Jesus Christ is the heart of Christian faith. If Jesus wasn't divine it would have impossible to save us from sin.
- ❖ The interpersonal relationship between the trinity and the creation is a proof that a personal relationship is very possible.

FUNCTIONS OF THE PERSONALITIES IN THE TRINITY.

1. God the Father – creation and redemption
2. God the Son – carried the decrees of the father – everything was made through him, redeeming mankind to God through salvation.
3. The Holy Spirit – giving newness and regeneration to those that the Son saves and preserving them in faith until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

ATTRIBUTE OF GOD

When we talk about the attributes of God we are talking about His nature—who God is in His manifested character. These 10 attributes are not the only ones set forth in scripture. However, these will give you a better appreciation of who God is.

1 OMNISCIENT

God knows everything and His knowledge is complete. This is called His omniscience. Isaiah said that Israel had not seen everything that God had planned (Isaiah 40:28). Job said that God had all knowledge (Job 37:16). The psalmist said that God's understanding was infinite (Psalm 147:5). The New Testament also claims God's omniscience in 1 John 3:20 and Romans 11:33.

2 OMNIPOTENT

God is able to bring to pass everything that He chooses. He has no external limitations. His only limits are those He places upon Himself. The book of Job (42:2) says that He can do all things and that nothing can restrain him. Genesis 18:14 simply asks, "Is anything too hard for the LORD?" The answer, of course, is "no."

3 OMNIPRESENT

God's omnipresence speaks to the fact that He is present in all places at all times. While God is in Heaven, His throne, He is also present in every place. Proverbs 15:3 says that His eyes are in every place. Jeremiah says that God is close at hand and that no one can hide himself from God (Jeremiah 23:23, 24). The classic passage on God's omnipresence is Psalm 139:7-12 where the psalmist says that he can never be out of the sight of God.

4 IMMUTABLE

By nature, God is absolutely unchanging. For this reason, the attributes He possessed before the creation of the world are the same ones He has today. Psalm 90:2 says that before anything was created God was eternal and existed in the same state that He is in now. Malachi 3:6 says, "I am the Lord, I change not."

5 Holy

Though all the attributes of God are important and dependent on one another, the fact of God's holiness seems to be the one He wishes us to put emphasis upon. When God revealed Himself to man (Moses, Job, Isaiah, Mount of Transfiguration, etc.) each encounter mentions

His holiness. Isaiah called God “the Holy One” more than 30 times. Psalm 99:9 says, “the Lord our God is holy.” Because of His holiness He cannot accept, nor even look upon sin (Habakkuk 1:13).

6 **RIGHTEOUS**

God’s holiness is manifested in His righteousness. Because He is holy, He is righteous. This attribute of righteousness is the way His holiness is expressed when dealing with men. Psalm 116:5 and Ezra 9:15 say that God is righteous. Many verses declare His righteousness (Exodus 9:23-27; Psalm 129:4; 145:17; Jeremiah 12:1; 1 John 1:9)

7 **SOVEREIGN**

God’s sovereignty is how He rules His creation. This is what makes Him free to do what He knows is best for us. Though He is in complete control, He has also given us a free will to obey or reject His leading. The first verse of the Bible says that God does what He chooses to do. The entire first chapter shows God’s authority and sovereignty over His creation. The Bible is full of passages that show God leading or commanding people to do certain things.

8 **LOVE**

If there is one attribute that people love to embrace, it is the fact that God is love. This word encapsulates for us His mercy, grace and loving-kindness. God is not like the deities of other religions who are thought of as angry and hateful. God is loving towards His creatures. He wants to share a personal relationship with us. 1 John 4 talks extensively about God’s love. Not just that God *has* love, but that He *is* love.

9 **MERCIFUL**

God’s mercy has been defined as God not giving us what we deserve. We, as sinners, deserve eternal punishment away from His presence, yet in His mercy He has chosen to offer us a way for salvation (Ephesians 2:4; Romans 5:8). Deuteronomy 4:31 and Psalm 103:8 say that God is merciful. A beautiful picture of God’s mercy is shown in the parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15.

10 **TRINITY**

While God is one, He manifests Himself in three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament often the plural form of the Hebrew

word *God* is used when speaking about Him (Elohim). The Bible refers to the “Angel of the Lord” several times. This is a reference to a physical manifestation of God (Genesis 16, 18). The Holy Spirit is also mentioned in the Old Testament (Genesis 1:2; Judges 6:34).

The doctrine of the Trinity is taught even more clearly in the New Testament. The baptism of Christ in Matthew 3:16, 17 shows the three persons of the Trinity. God speaks as the Holy Spirit descends from heaven to Jesus. Another example is the way in which we are instructed to be baptized in Matthew 28—in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Jesus also said that He would ask God the Father to send the Holy Spirit as a comforter in John 14. The Bible also claims that each one of the three are God (the Father, Romans 1:7; the Son, Hebrews 1:8; the Spirit, Acts 5:3, 4).

PRAYER

Prayer is typically imagined as talking to God, but I often pray through silence or meditating on a scripture verse or even just thinking about God’s presence. Prayer is extremely adaptable, fitting any personality or situation.

THE ACTS FORMULA FOR PRAYER

A – Adoration

I love to begin my prayers by thinking about how awesome God is. **I think about God’s all-encompassing love, which to me is the most powerful force imaginable.** I think about the aspects of life that leave me totally in awe – everything from breath-taking natural landscapes to little acts of kindness that feel like divine intervention.

Sometimes I simply repeat the words, “I believe” over and over again. Beginning my prayer time this way helps me gain some perspective; it helps me to recognize just how cool it is that God is with me all the time.

C – Confession

Next I move onto the confessing bit. I openly recognize my shortcomings and my flaws; I think through situations where I could have behaved differently, with more compassion. **It's important to note that, for me, this isn't about imposing a major guilt trip or wallowing in shame.** Rather, it's about acknowledging my lack of perfection; indeed, it's about letting go of the need or desire to be perfect in the first place.

Confessing my mistakes to God is an opportunity for learning and growth, and a chance to recognize the full power of forgiveness and mercy and love. Experiencing these things personally helps me to show them to others more freely.

T – Thanksgiving

I talk a lot on this blog about the importance of **feeling and expressing gratitude**. **The more regularly I do this, the more joy I experience in life.**

Some of my prayers involve thanksgiving for the biggies – my health, my relationships, the meeting of my basic needs, etc. –

S – Supplication

“Supplication” is a big fancy word that basically just means making a request. **I can make requests on behalf of the world (for things like poverty or the environment or peace), on behalf of others (my mom, my brother, that guy who lives down the street) or on behalf of myself.**

For years I never did that last one, believing that praying for myself was selfish and unacceptable to God. But now I really don't think that's the case. I'm trying to be the best person I can be, but of course I need God's help to make that happen!.

PARENTING

I. ESSENTIAL TRUTHS TO TEACH OUR CHILDREN

1. Subjection to Authority

Time and again, the Word of God calls us to be in **subjection to authority**. If there is a place where this call should be especially steady and certain, it is the family. And it is a happy family who cultivates this habit of subordination.

God has assigned the years of childhood and youth to parental control. This wise and generous arrangement simply cannot be upended without jeopardizing the best interests of our children for time and eternity. It is an arrangement that will preserve a child from a thousand evils.

The spirit that considers a parent's wishes—that hesitates to violate a parent's authority—that prefers to sacrifice its own gratification—this spirit is one of the strongest shields that can be thrown around youthful character.

In fact, this spirit of submission helps lead to early purity. Not every dutiful child is pure, but it certainly is more likely that such a child will become so, rather than one of an obstinate, unbending temper.

2. Sacred Regard for Truthfulness

A sacred regard for truth is also a prime habit. What a difference exists in the dispositions of children! Some rarely, if ever, lie and some just seem to be born with a lying tongue. It is terrifying to see how an early habit of extravagant and false storytelling sticks to one's character.

And what a strong barrier this lying throws in the way of holiness and heaven! Children must be taught the immense importance of always speaking the truth. They must see that love,

confidence, and honor—or disgust, distrust, and disgrace—will follow them as they let either truth or lies lead them. Every false statement—every art of concealment—every exaggeration—every broken promise—only hardens the heart. It burns the conscience and opens another avenue to new seductions.

On the other hand—truth, pure truth—with all its simplicity and loveliness—forms the foundation of every moral virtue.

3. Industrious Habits

Do we have our eyes on our child's best interests? We will prepare them for some sort of useful employment. **Industrious habits** have such a happy influence on the intellectual and moral character. Many a child has been lost—to himself—to his family—to the world—and to God—because he had little else to do but indulge himself. But many have been rescued from disgrace and ruin—and pointed toward industry, accomplishment and happiness—simply because they had little time for entertainment.

Now, when we talk about hard work, are we enemies of refinement? Certainly not—and we do not want to prepare our children merely for splendid accomplishments. Courtesy and elegance also have a happy influence on character. But combine them with enterprising work habits, and you have a truly powerful force.

4. Temperance

Temperance is inseparable from a good education. Every generation brings new and different temptations to be intemperate. If a child cannot be temperate, there is little hope that he will be holy or respectable as an adult. Intemperance in thought, word, or deed is simply an indulgence.

For a while an uncurbed, unrestrained child may roll right over life's bumps, but eventually distress and ruin will come calling.

Health, intellect, character, usefulness, comfort, property, conscience, and the soul—all are so easily sacrificed at the shrine of the 'god of intemperance'. A child's mind is the door to his heart, and our children must think, feel, and consider clearly, before they will repent, pray, and love.

If the God of all the earth has appointed parents the immediate guardians of their children's happiness, virtue, and hopes—let us beware how we sow 'seeds of intemperance' in infancy and nurture them in childhood. They are fertile seeds—and prolific in death.

5. Selection of Friends

Parents should also consider their children's **selection of friends**, and teach them wisdom in this area. This cannot always be under parental control, but at least we can teach them discernment with regard to their friends.

There are two aspects of this principle. First, **the family is the most important set of relationships that God has given us**. How we deal with other relationships is directly affected by how we deal with the people in our family.

The second aspect of this principle is **recognizing how other people influence and affect us**. Idle, vicious, ignorant or skeptical tendencies in our companions often influence us to the detriment of our convictions. We are sometimes unconscious of this effect. **Sin is contagious**—it seems all right if everyone else is doing it. Children should be encouraged to flee these tendencies, and to live as righteous children of God.

It is here, in the company of older friends, that—example persuades—argument encourages—exhortation stimulates—flattery deceives—and ridicule mocks. Here all that is social and sympathetic in a child is pressed into the service of good—or evil.

"Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise—but **the companion of fools** will suffer harm."—Proverbs 13:20. Many parents have seen their hopes die in such a circle of friends.

Our children's relaxation and even their employment (where possible) should ideally be at home. No matter where they are, their entertainment should never bring reproach upon a well-governed and godly family.

This means that parents may need to deny themselves some creature comforts. Is this unthinkable in our current affluence? If by a few sacrifices you could purchase for your children the habit of loving their home, is any price too high? Those families are best educated, and exhibit the most moral feeling, which are most tenderly attached to home. Soon enough, our children will be extending their borders beyond it.

While we ought not to be completely separated from the world, **every family ought to be a little world within itself**. A bright, strong affection for the images and friendships of early life so easily draws an affectionate child away from temptations. They bind him to his home, so that no matter how far a child may be removed from your control, as long as this affection moves and glows within him, his love for home will keep him from falling.

6. Proper Estimation of the World and Its Culture

What do children esteem most highly? They should be carefully taught how to **estimate this world and its culture**. Many prudent, even pious parents encourage far too much zeal for **worldly advancement**. The spirit of this competitive world is so ingrained in our anxious parents' minds. The great object of our pursuit insensibly becomes the attainment of wealth and honor.

Certainly parents should be concerned for the character and condition of their children in this life. We want to see our children develop useful and respectable character. We will urge them to unbending fidelity in their profession, whatever it may be. We will inspire our children with a generous 'love of excellence' and a 'strong desire for good'. We will aim for excellence in the best sense of the word.

But it is not an easy matter in everyday life for parents to draw a line between that love of distinction and excellence which the gospel requires—and that which flows from a selfish and worldly heart. We all sin in this regard. It is very natural for us to smile whenever we discover in our children a spirit that is eagerly set on worldly good, or that is simply shrewd. In doing so, we leave them with the impression that, in our estimation, there is no good to be compared with this world.

Do we regularly cultivate higher and nobler principles than the love of earthly things? If our children are taught that the great business of men is to heap up wealth, attain honors, and enjoy human life, what will be the probable end of their careers?

If we would train them up for usefulness and heaven, they must often be reminded to put a low estimate upon everything beneath the sun. **They must not be shielded from the world—but instead taught how vain and empty a thing it is!**

The sooner a child can see—that there is a higher object of pursuit than his own advancement—that there are more elevated and enduring joys than the sordid and transitory pleasures of time and sense—the sooner he will bear fruit unto eternal life. The sooner he sees that even though he may attain popularity, power and wealth and yet be filled with disappointment and sorrow—the more quickly he is prepared for eternal usefulness.

Let children be taught that God sent them into the world to do their duty—to fill up their life with usefulness—and thus to honor His great name. If this generous principle takes its seat in their hearts, they will enjoy greater real happiness, than if they sit in the thrones of princes, or become possessors of untold millions.

If parents know their children's hearts—and especially if they know their own—they will always tremble for them at the prospect of 'career advancement'. The wisdom that comes from above will lead them often to say to their child, as God did to the Prophet, "Do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them!"—Jeremiah 45:5.

Let children be taught that God sent them into the world for the sole purpose of obeying him, and bringing honor to His great name. If this principle rests in their hearts, and becomes a controlling influence on their lives, they will find contentment and satisfaction in the work God has given them.—Colossians 3:23.

7. A Generous Spirit

Oh, the lifelong joy and reward of a **generous spirit!** This is a chord to which the conscience always vibrates. Children quickly grasp this truth: A selfish spirit is a low, abject and base spirit. There is nothing more elevated—more grand and noble—than a benevolent and unselfish spirit!

Let your children be taught the evil of a selfish spirit, and the beauty and excellence of an unselfish spirit, unattached to 'toys of dust'. Help them to think of the welfare of others. Form in them the habit of consulting the wishes and feelings of others. Fix their minds upon objects that are great and good.

Prepare them for acts of generosity. Show them that "it is more blessed to give, than to receive"—that there is more pleasure in offering a gift than accepting it, and more lasting joy in the enlarged, generous spirit of the gospel—than the low, groveling spirit of the world.

Children can quickly discover that there are interests greater than their own—and, if they have an enlarged and princely spirit—interests which they will be happier for investigating.

Let not their grand inquiry be—"What is best for me?" But—"What does my duty require? What does generosity require? What does the spirit of kindness and unselfishness require? What does God require?"

The 19th century commentator Thomas Scott was well known for his remarkably happy, successful family. When once asked about his method, he replied, "I have always sought for them in the first place, the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Happy parent! Happy children! where the "kingdom of God and his righteousness" take the precedence in every plan and arrangement for human life!

To the religious character of our children, everything else ought to be made subservient. Our high privilege is to "bring up children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." Whatever others may say or do, Christian parents should choose for their children that "good part which shall not be taken from them." To them, everything else should be like dust!

Exhaust the weight and vigor of your effort here! Our children are heirs to immortality! They are creatures of responsibility, and are rapidly advancing to the judgment seat. Soon they will be upon a bed of death from which they will ascend to heaven or descend to hell—to the extent they sought or rejected, followed or despised their great Redeemer.

It is painfully true, that ordinarily, children will not become holy without persevering parents. We cannot expect them to become skillful in the arts, learned in the sciences, or useful in the world without our careful attention. And if we hope to see them become the children of God, they must understand that, in our estimation, their 'character' absorbs and eclipses every other intention of our parental love.

II. MEASURES TO TAKE IN TEACHING OUR CHILDREN

1. Set an Example

"Be what you wish your child to be," the saying goes. So much is accomplished by "the power of **example**". It influences children long before instruction can inform—or authority can bind. "Rules constrain—example is alluring. Rules compel—example persuades. Rules are a dead law—example a living law." Next to the 'law of conscience', **example** is the first law with which children are acquainted—and it often remains their strongest motive to action after all others are forgotten.

Children are imitative beings, and they quickly understand what they see and hear. **The example of an affectionate and watchful parent is a powerful influence!** No child is too young to be the accurate observer of its parent's conduct—and to be purified or contaminated, by that example. **However unwittingly—we are constantly molding our children's minds, habit, and character by the power of our example!**

Who among us desires for our children to be unyielding, overbearing, contemptuous, unkind, unfriendly, or discourteous? But if they discover these in us—our example will govern their conduct!

Perhaps most to the point in this very affluent society—we do not want our children to be afraid of work or hardship—so **why do we ourselves pursue fashion and leisure?** The message quickly forms in their minds—My parents do not consider hard work, or diligence, or "redeeming the time"—to be reputable or pleasurable. They are satisfied with an easy life. With such a message, is it likely that our children will aspire to hard work, usefulness and accomplishment?

We want our children to be honorable and completely truthful. We want them to be punctual and thorough. But if they hear us extolling these virtues and know that instead we bend the truth and are disorganized and careless, will not our **conduct** trump our **teaching**?

We want our children to carefully choose their friends and conversation. But what if we are careless in this regard? What are the pleasures of modern society? Judging from the reality of the popular market today, they lie somewhere on a spectrum that stretches from popular

entertainment—to gambling—to drunkenness—to pornography—to prostitution. And now, perhaps more than ever, all of these lie in some form waiting to entice our children. Must we give them an easy opening—right into our own lives and homes?

Example rules! Do we express careless doubts about the truth of God's word and the power of the gospel? Do we not reverence the Sabbath? Do we neglect regular worship? **Are we conformed to this world?** Are we careless about joining ourselves to a body of believers? Is our object to be rich, great, and honored by all? If so, will we have any ground for disappointment **if our example defeats our instructions?**

We are always acting in the presence of our children—so let us do it in such a righteous way that they are enticed to imitate us!

2. Provide Vigorous Instruction

Children are not merely creatures of imitation, but creatures of intellect. They examine and judge the impressions they get—and confirm or reject them according to how they are **taught**.

There is no subject off limits for parents in teaching their children. What gratification for a child to be rightly taught and educated! Frequent conversation with your children—not preaching, but personal conversation—will bear immediate fruit. Your child must feel that you want to inform his understanding and judgment—enlighten his conscience—and impress his heart.

Parents! You must recognize a mournful fact—**your child is depraved!** You will fail utterly to educate him if you don't recognize this sad reality. He possesses a supremely selfish spirit—**'self-indulgence' is his king!** Worse—unless he is instructed in moral truth, he will become a slave of base appetites and unholy passions! **He will become a giant in wickedness!**

But the Creator has given this child a tender **conscience**. Enlightened, it differentiates between right and wrong and gives him a sense of obligation—it is how a child becomes a moral agent

and different from an animal. He can learn that he is a responsible creature. Does he know his relationship to God? He must feel accountable to Him.

What a person ought to know—he ought to begin to know very early. The great moral principles, which enlighten his adult conscience and character, ought to penetrate and work on his dark mind in childhood.

What God requires of parents is clearly spelled out—"And these words which I command you shall be in your heart, and you must diligently teach them to your children—when you walk—when you lie down—and when you rise up!" And not just principles. Children must be taught the truth about God—His being, perfections, and government—redemption by Jesus Christ—the influence of the Holy Spirit—the beauty of true faith—the joys and honors of an unreserved devotion to Jesus—His precious promises for the godly—and the dreadful terrors awaiting the ungodly.

INSTRUCTION in God's Word should be **systematic, regular** and **frequent**. It should be **casual**, also—"When you walk by the way". Early let them be made familiar with Scriptures. Let their memories be stored with its history—its biography—and its truths. Let them also be stored with simple and truthful catechisms, prayers, and sacred hymns. How tragic that these ancient tools have fallen into disuse! The child's attention should be constantly be diverted from **light and destructive reading**—to that which is profitable and constructive!

Who disagrees that the great bulk of today's literature and entertainment exerts a destructive influence—both on the intellectual and moral character? But let us not just curse the darkness. Let children be committed to teachers who will exert a holy influence on their youthful minds. Let this influence charm and win them to the love of virtue and godliness. In this furnishing of their minds, let them be so preoccupied with the best instructions—that they shall have little room for noxious and polluting guests.

In conversing with them on the great subject of their soul's salvation, we should address them with all affection and tenderness. Let us urge and plead with them to 'flee from the wrath to

come!" We want them to see that this is a subject about which we feel the deepest and most tender concern. This a subject that brings tears to our eyes—and persuasion from our tongues. On this matter all the passion and strength of our affection flows forth in "thoughts that glow—and words that burn."

There is an inexcusable backwardness in many parents when it comes to conversing on religious subjects. Do we pile religious conversation onto our children, no matter how inappropriate the timing or application? Every opportunity for instruction should be well timed—and never made tedious.

Timing is everything! In the history of a child, there are seasons of searching and tenderness—and there are seasons of openness. And there are times when we ourselves think much, feel deeply, and pray earnestly—for the salvation of our children. Out of these special times, we may proceed with special confidence and a delightful fullness of soul, to serious and heartwarming conversations with our children—with more than usual hopes of success!

This is a job for parents alone. Here, the faithful efforts of a faithful father—and even more, a godly mother—are most important. Faithful parents certainly owe much to the other faithful adults in a child's life—Sunday school teachers, nannies, and godly women and elders in Christ's church. These all have obligations that may never be forgotten.

But that **mother** who leaves her child only to the instruction of teachers—or that **father** who neglects the Christian education of his family at home (because he can shift the burden onto a religious school)—has not carefully considered his responsibility. More importantly, he underestimates **the power a parent has in shaping the character and destiny of his children.**

3. Gain Their Confidence

In all their conduct toward them, parents should seek to gain children's confidence. **Every child should be convinced that his parent is his best friend.** He must know that there are none on

whose devoted attachment he may so completely rely. There are none who will do and suffer so patiently and so long for him. Who look for no higher gratification or reward, than his good conduct and highest welfare.

Once we plant these thoughts in a child's heart, we cannot fail to have a strong hold upon his conscience and character.

But this alone may not gain their confidence. We should use every sensible and lawful means—to secure the affections of our children—to induce them to choose our company—to enter into conversation with us without embarrassment—and trust us with their own private affairs.

Children who want to be respectful to their parents are sometimes afraid of becoming 'too familiar'. And some parents who desire to be respected and honored by their children strangely resist such familiarity.

Where children are held in **slavish fear**—the fault is always the parent's. Even with children whose tempers seemingly cannot be controlled by other means, there is little hope of having any happy, long-term influence as long as they are held in the bondage of fear.

Gaining the confidence of an impetuous child—while restraining him—is no small feat. It calls on all the **kindness, discretion** and **firmness** of a godly parent—who will soon go to his heavenly Father for wisdom!

4. Train Your Children to Be Under Authority

The great question in every act of parental discipline is—"What will be for the best good of the child?" Where a family is small, and especially where there is but a single child, this may be the only question.

Every good system of education maintains a **kind and wholesome authority**. The government of a family is of a peculiar kind—and its great operating principle comes from the Apostle

Paul—"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

To be what it ought to be—**your authority must be absolute!** "Those who maintain the strictest discipline—give the fewest strokes!" If your authority is absolute—it need not be severe. Your will should first be righteous—and then it should be law! Anything to which you cannot freely consent, should be considered as altogether out of the question for your child.

Family government must never be **impulsive**. Do you exercise your authority only when the notion strikes you? Are you foolishly indulgent? Is your authority so various and changeable that your children don't know what the rules are? Do you announce a rule and then, without any change of circumstance, revoke it? Such government does not deserve the name. It is enough to spoil any child.

A mild, affectionate government is the most authoritative—so your authority ought to be exceedingly KIND. Children are naturally displeased, even angry, when governed—but they ought to find no foothold for their anger in their parents' behavior. The human heart revolts at simply being restrained, and all that much more when authority is rash and unkind. Weave "kindness" in with every act of discipline—and your government will rarely fail to influence.

By the time a child can walk—and even earlier—he should be taught implicitly to obey! If parental authority is not established early—it will never be established. When I say early—I mean **very early!** By the time a child is 15 years old, authority—bare authority—will not reach him. He must then be under a government of influence—or be self-governed—or not governed at all.

The alternative is simply more difficult and impractical! This early habit of subjection—even to impatient and unbending children—will soon become easy, and parents will find it effective too.

Here may I add—I have no doubt of the propriety and importance of "**corporal punishment**". God has abundantly approved of it in His word. But it is only for a child. When that child passes

from childhood to, say, fifteen years of age, the same rod does him injury (unless it is used in response to downright impudence or disobedience). If the 'young adult' will not be governed by reason, kindness, influence—he needs a stronger arm than the discipline of his family!

Indeed, all our efforts to train up our children in the way they should go, exhaust their influence before we are aware of it! **The days of childhood—these are the seasons when character is formed!** And if these are neglected, it will be a miracle of mercy if our children are not forever lost!

The parents purposes in discipline should never come in collision with each other. Marital discord is the deadliest foe to the education of children. On every topic of education, let there be no jarring between the united head of a family.

Are you, for example, a proponent of **extravagant leisure and entertainment**—and your spouse opposed? Are you "early to bed, early to rise"—and your spouse up at all hours? Is your spouse firm in authority—and you chide her as severe, and the enemy of your children's pleasures? Your bone of contention is the child you love! Who can wonder if your authority—and your child—are sacrificed in the squabble?

When should parental government cease? Wisdom would tell you to look at the disposition of your child—and the condition of your family. Are you seeing increasingly joyful experiences with your children? That would certainly point in the direction of their freedom. On the other hand, if your experiences are bitter, patience—not harsher government—is the remedy. Patience—and hope in God.

Humble, persevering prayer will accomplish much in educating your children! Is your **pride** concentrated in your children? Parents of great intellect and determination—especially young parents—are very apt to place great confidence in their own skill, management, and firmness. This **pride in our children—and confidence in ourselves**—will meet with severe trials. The Lord of heaven and earth holds both in His hands.

God means for us to renounce our self-confidence and feel our dependence on Him. When we fail—as certainly we will to some extent—we will lie prostrate on our faces and carry our children to the God of all grace and power. The sooner, more earnestly, and more submissively we do this, the more reason we have to hope.

Parental tenderness is the most **pure**, the most **faithful**, and the most **productive**—when **prayer** nourishes it. It is at God's mercy-seat that a parent's love all flows out. And God reveals His mercy exactly as our children need it.

Let your children hear you pray daily. Pray for them so they can hear you asking God's special blessing on them. And then remember them in your private devotions. An affectionate and faithful parent will not let the Angel of the Covenant go—until He blesses his children.

Finally, do not be content to plead only for God's **restraining** grace! Go on in confidence to ask him for his **saving** mercy. Plead for them in their sinfulness—lost without Christ's blood. Plead for them because they possess indisputable, inalienable immortality. Plead for them with the tenderness of Jesus. Plead for them with the assurance that someday you will say with Jesus, "Of those whom you have given me—I have lost none."

III. COURAGE! TAKE COURAGE!

1. Do Not Get Weary in Well Doing

God's time for the conversion of your children may not be **your** time. Your efforts may seem to be in vain—even for years—but you will likely at last see your children rejoicing in the graces and comforts of holiness. He who goes forth and weeps, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

A hardened, ungrateful child may break your heart ten thousand times. He may turn you grey with grief, even to the grave—but you can look back and know that you were not negligent.

2. Be a Correctable Parent

You may be doing all of this faithfully, and your children will long praise you for it. But **if you know you have been unfaithful** in this, know also that this unfaithfulness greatly displeases God. You will feel the bitter consequences forever. Yes, God may allow your children to live out very unholy lives before your eyes. **You may even live to see them plunge down to death and hell!**

Do you stand between God and His blessing for your children? I have simple advice—Reform at once! Take your child by the hand—while you can—and walk them in the paths of holiness and salvation.

Look at your children. Look at their cradle. Anticipate their progress through this ensnaring world. Look at death and judgment. Will you meet them there—with joy? Will you, on the morning of resurrection, greet your sons and daughters with a smile?

3. Children— Consider Your High Obligations

"Honor your father and mother, that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."—Ephesians 6:2-3. We have seen this promise delightfully fulfilled. And, tragically, we have seen its implied threat executed with force. In New York, this guilty metropolis, where popular trends and fashions are their most powerful—I **have seen so many youth glide down the dangerous current**, and I have seen them pay the ultimate price as they scorned authority.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord—for this is right. But I want so much more from you. I want—your hearts—your lives—and your existence for Him who made you. Remember your

Creator in the days of your youth. Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while he is near.

Hear me once more, if you still despise this great salvation—What is this great infatuation that drives you on to ruin and despair? Are you sporting with that over which the saints in glory weep? Were you nurtured in the lap of holiness—only for the society and employment of the fiends of hell? Let the 'world of darkness' never rejoice that **you**—the object of so many prayers and tears—have become its own child!