

PREFACE

"I thank God for pastor's burden for our children's souls such that he was burdened to preach to us 'Parenting And Nurture' from the book of Proverbs. This is the most comprehensive parenting session I ever had in my parenting years. My daughter Carmen Pee is turning fifteen at the end of this year. I wished I had heard this sermon before I became a mother. That would have saved me many years of anxieties and confusions because I brought up Carmen through trial and error. I had no clear scriptural instructions on how to bring up a child. My knowledge on parenting was based on James Dobson's parenting books. Although my husband and I were very strict with Carmen since she was a baby, our dealing with her was targeted only at her behaviour but not at the depravity of her heart.

It was very enlightening to me when pastor brought out that if we do not apply the rod on our children and deal with their sins thoroughly, we are actually denying the doctrine of man, the doctrine of sin and man's depravity. Pastor showed us from Proverbs 22:15 that 'Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.' Pastor said that the phrase 'in the heart' means the depravity within the heart. This explained to me why even a baby, so tiny and helpless, can control a mother by her cries. When pastor read to us Proverbs 23:14, I was very much convicted that the caning of our children is not just for the sake of producing children with good behaviour but it is more so to deliver their souls from hell. It serves to prepare their hearts to receive the grace of God.

Personally, I have found that parenting a child is the hardest job. I was looking forward to motherhood with unrealistic expectations. I thought I would be seeing an adorable angelic face smiling at me while I sang lullabies and read nursery rhymes to my baby. To my horror, even before I was discharged from the hospital, the nurse told me that the baby we heard screaming at top of her voice in the nursery room was my baby! I was not prepared for a baby's screaming that go past midnight, demanding to be rocked and carried. Pastor explained that the word 'betimes' in Proverbs 13:24 means 'early', when the child is still very young. Many parents do not have the heart to chasten a child when the child is still very young. Some feel that a baby is too young to understand what it means to obey and some feel that it is cruel to treat a baby harshly. But I can testify that a baby who is just a few weeks old can understand what it means to obey. I remember one evening when Vincent, my mum-in-law and I were having our dinner, we left Carmen, who was then about a month old, strapped on a bounce net next to us. She was crying because she wanted to be carried. My mum-in-law stopped eating and wanted to carry her. Vincent told her 'no'. He then placed our screaming baby in our dark bedroom, told her to cry all she wanted and he would only bring her out when she stopped crying. Then he closed the room door. We continued eating and I kept checking the clock anxiously while she continued screaming. She cried non-stop for one full hour and then she stopped. Then Vincent brought her out and warned her that if she cried again, she would go back to the room. Ever since then, she never cried during our meal time. Although she was only about a month old, she understood that her cry would not work on us but would instead invite punishment from us.

Many parents do have fears that they would injure the child if they cane the child too hard and too much. Carmen received a lot of caning especially when she was a toddler. When Vincent caned her, the marks on her thighs and legs would last for one week. Once, when Vincent pulled over the car to the roadside and gave Carmen a tight slap on her cheek for throwing tantrums while we were travelling, my mother told Vincent that Carmen could become deaf because of the slap on her cheek. She was only less than a year old. I was affected by what my mother had said. When I sent Carmen to a Chinese primary school that administered caning, I wrote a letter to the teacher and told her to cane Carmen only on her legs but not her hands, fearing that her fingers would suffer accidental injury. We are bound to have all kinds of fears even when we apply the rod on our children. I thank pastor for showing us the assurance given to us in Proverbs 23:13 'Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.'

I also discovered that children can be emotionally manipulative. They can show us their pitiful face and use crying to move a parent's heart. During a caning, they will cry and even extend their hands to us to be hugged and carried. If they succeed in doing this, they know that the caning will stop.

Pastor told us not to allow their crying to truncate the process of dealing with the depravity within their hearts. Pastor showed us Proverbs 19:18 'Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.'” Part 1 of Olive Pee’s Sabbath vespers in response to presiding pastor’s message on Parenting And Nurture, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 5 July AD 2009