

**Passing Responsibility to Children
Galatians 6:2-5
August 28, 2019**

Did you know that today the average age when a child leaves home is 27 - in 1970 that age was 22 - In the 1500 that age was 16.

Let me read you a brief article to set the stage for this evening's Study: this is an article from a Psychologist who writes for Amazon Answers.

Most middle class baby boomers left home about 17 or 18. Unless you were staying to take over the farm, you got out. Not because you had to, but because you just knew it was time to start taking care of yourself. Mom and Dad were no longer required or expected to put up with you. They put in their time. You were out. No excuses.

Parents today, are putting up with kids for way past what is traditionally expected or what can be normally tolerated. Today's reluctant high school graduate is not out. They stay and stay and we (parents) get older and crankier.

What is different now?

The average age when a child leaves home is 27. It is SLOWLY driving parents mad. Maybe the next generation will be handling it better. But those of us stuck in this one are seriously annoyed about this situation.

In this culture, my culture, we simply do not have clear rules about what to do with these kids. Who pays for what, who decides what, how do you parent a fully grown adult? How are they supposed to treat you? We are given the excuse that times have changed. Have they really? Isn't there just a new set of issues?

About this time, the young are supposed to flee the nest and go off into the world to live their lives. We parents are about done doing the 24 hour thing. We are close to completing our mission. We can taste the freedom. We have kept them alive. That's enough, don't you think? I am tired of it and like the biological baby clock, the parenting clock tells me it is time they were out!

Or as another writer put it, "It's almost like 27 is the new 18!"

Has ANYONE HERE WITNESSED this parent and this dilemma? - Of course the REAL QUESTION being wrestled with today's is, "Did we parents cause the problem, or did our children?"

I think I have AN ANSWER - It is one FOUND IN THE BIBLE - It is this: OVER THE PAST 40 YEARS, we have lost our way in how we are QUOTE, **"helping our children"**!

Do you know HOW TO REALLY HELP your children grow up and TAKE RESPONSIBILITY for their lives? - It is easy TO DO THINGS for our children, but is this approach HELPING THEM?

Do you sometimes have a difficult time DRAWING A LINE between when you ARE HELPING THEM, and when you SHOULD BACK OFF and let them SINK OR SWIM on their own? - Sometimes there is A FINE LINE between HELPING & HURTING our children.

The MOTIVATING FACTOR for many parents is that we just don't want our children TO FAIL - We don't want to see them DEAL WITH DISAPPOINTMENT - We have somehow become afraid that they will be DAMAGED FOR LIFE if they fail a test.

In reality JUST THE OPPOSITE is true - Failure is where we learn SO MANY LESSONS - We learn the connection between WORK & REWARD - we learn the relationship between INPUT & OUTCOME!

If you RESCUE YOUR CHILD every time they should STUMBLE & FALL, they never learn this important truth - They grow up BELIEVING THE LIE that I can make NO EFFORT and magically things will get done! - We all know this just DOES NOT HAPPEN!

Let's quickly talk about THE GOAL OF PARENTING - In other words, what is MOTIVATING YOU when you approach teaching & helping your child?

If your goal with your child is **“for them to succeed” or “for them to be happy” or “for them to feel good about themselves”** - you have the WRONG GOALS - these are BY-PRODUCTS, not goals!

If these are what is motivating you in your interaction with your child, then you will do things like: **do their homework for them! - go online and get copies of the upcoming test! - You might even keep them at home if you feel they are not prepared for the test that day!**

These might insure your child's success for that day or for that quarter, but are you REALLY HELPING THEM? - They are HAPPY TODAY, but will they be happy next week or next quarter when they are UNPREPARED for the next level of learning?

As parents our goals should be VERY DIFFERENT - They should be things like - **“becoming responsible; becoming independent of me; growing and maturing as a person”** - These are traits on which SUCCESS & HAPPINESS are built!

A child FEELS GOOD about themselves when they learn they CAN HANDLE PROBLEMS - they feel self-confident when they KNOW THEY CAN BE RESPONSIBLE for the problems they face.

These are the PROPER GOALS from parents - Are you doing the tough things that will allow your child TO GROW & MATURE? - Or are you SHIELDING THEM from any DIFFICULTY that might challenge them and cause them to grow?

FAILURE (as much as we hate it) IS A CLOSE FRIEND OF THE GROWING, MATURING PERSON!

GOD HAS DESIGNED RULES (POLICIES) to guide us in helping our children - When we VIOLATE THESE POLICIES, we don't really HELP THEM - And worse, we sometimes do more harm than good by ENABLING THEM to live lives of IRRESPONSIBILITY!

2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Principle 1 - Help our children carry the heavy loads of life.

“Burdens” - Greek meaning is **“extra heavy load”** - EXCESSIVE BURDEN - more than one person could CARRY ALONE - When we see ANOTHER PERSON FALLING under the burden of an EXTRA HEAVY LOAD, it is OUR RESPONSIBILITY to step in and help.

EX: Have you ever had to MOVE A PIANO? - It is NOT A ONE MAN JOB! - It is almost impossible to MOVE ONE ALONE - it is a HEAVY BURDEN!

It takes at least TWO PEOPLE to move one for any distance - There are certain PROBLEMS IN LIFE that our children can't handle alone - but, THESE ARE RARE.

Just like you DON'T MOVE HEAVY FURNITURE every day, children don't face HEAVY BURDENS everyday - They would like for you to think THAT HOMEWORK is a heavy burden, but it's not!

They would like for you to think READING THAT WHOLE CHAPTER is a burden they cannot bear, but it's not! - They just don't want to TAKE IT ON ALONE - especially when you BEGGING TO help them!

What would be a HEAVY BURDEN for an ELEMENTARY STUDENT? - Certainly handling school when there are OTHER FACTORS going such as if they are OUT FOR AN EXTENDED period of time because of sickness - they need your help.

If there are FAMILY ISSUES at home, such as DIVORCE OR A DEATH in the family - maybe the serious illness of a PARENT - these may cause them to NEED YOUR EXTRA HELP to keep up with normal things.

But . . . just because a NEW CONCEPT IS DIFFICULT, it doesn't mean you need to step in and RESCUE THEM - let them STRUGGLE SOME - the struggle is GOOD FOR THEM!

They need to learn that EVERY PROBLEM is not a problem THEY NEED HELP with - They have to learn that they are CAPABLE OF CARRYING far more than they think they can! - They need to learn that THEY CAN FIGURE THINGS OUT even when it requires HARD WORK & FAILURE!

If you are a FIXER, or a very NURTURING PERSON, you are going to have a difficult time STANDING BACK and watching your child struggle - your temptation is going to be want to RESCUE THEM - You are going to want to SOLVE EVERY PROBLEM they face - forgetting the value of problems!

Even the child with a DIAGNOSED LEARNING DISABILITY must learn to solve some problems alone - You have to learn HOW TO HELP THEM without crippling them - I know this is NOT EASY!

“so fulfill the Law of Christ”? - John 13:34-35, “A new Commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

When I help someone BEAR A HEAVY BURDEN, I am “fulfilling the DESIRES OF JESUS” - I am truly LOVING THE WAY He loves!

SOLVING ALL MY CHILD'S PROBLEMS is **not loving them** - it is harming them! Look at verse 5.

5 For each one shall bear his own load.

Principle 2 - Every child must learn to take responsibility for their own life.

THE MOST DIFFICULT PART of helping a person, is doing so without TAKING AWAY their own personal RESPONSIBILITY - Paul says each person must BEAR THEIR OWN LOAD - the word here for LOAD IS DIFFERENT from the word BURDEN in verse 2.

A BURDEN WAS A HEAVY LOAD - It could not be HANDLED BY ONE PERSON - Again, think about MOVING THAT PIANO - Even with a DOLLY, it is just about impossible to MOVE BY YOURSELF - especially if you have to GO UP OR DOWN STAIRS.

Moving a piano is a HEAVY BURDEN - it is ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE to do it ALONE!

In contrast, think of this "LOAD" AS A SUITCASE - A SUITCASE IS DESIGNED to be carried by ONE PERSON - if I'm TRAVELING WITH YOU, I'm sorry but I'm NOT CARRYING your suitcase - I might carry MY WIFE SUITCASE - but usually she doesn't EXPECT ME to do that.

No, a SUITCASE IS DESIGNED so that the person it belongs to CARRIES IT - most of them EVEN HAVE WHEELS - they are NOT DESIGNED TO SHARE THE LOAD - it is often harder for TWO PEOPLE to carry a suitcase than it IS FOR ONE! - The second person only GETS IN THE WAY!

Every day of our lives GOD EXPECTS US to carry our OWN SUITCASE - My life is FULL OF RESPONSIBILITIES that I alone am SUPPOSE TO HANDLE - I have NO EXPECTATION of someone COMING ALONG and doing MY JOB!

Some of us HAVE LARGER SUITCASES than others - some people CAN CARRY HUGE amounts of responsibility - OTHERS CAN'T - their suitcases are MUCH SMALLER & LIGHTER.

There was a time when MY SUITCASE SEEMED PRETTY BIG - it CONTAINED A WIFE - 4 teenage children - a FULL-TIME JOB helping Pastor a GROWING CHURCH - a HOUSE with a mortgage - 5 cars needing REGULAR REPAIRS - COLLEGE TUITION.

Yard work - coaching TEAMS & supporting my CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES - supporting MY CHURCH - making sure MY BILLS were paid - it was a PRETTY FULL suitcase.

Please don't MISUNDERSTAND - I am NOT COMPLAINING or even suggesting that I had the BIGGEST SUITCASE - I am only saying, GOD EXPECTED ME TO CARRY MY LOAD.

There was NO ONE ELSE (other than MY WIFE) that I shared this LOAD WITH - We each had a PORTION OF THESE responsibilities in our suitcases.

It was MY SUITCASE and I needed to CARRY IT - We all have a suitcase OF RESPONSIBILITIES that God EXPECTS US TO CARRY - they are all DIFFERENT SIZES - but we all have one.

PARENTS, do you know that YOUR CHILDREN HAVE A SUITCASE that they are suppose to carry? - It holds things like SCHOOL WORK - HOME WORK - commitment to A TEAM - CHORES around the house - if they are OLDER, maybe even a PART-TIME JOB.

GUESS WHAT? - it is THEIR LOAD - it is NOT YOUR LOAD - You do your child A HUGE DISSERVICE when you carry it for them!

YOUR JOB as parent, is to DETERMINE what goes in THEIR SUITCASE, and deciding WHEN IT GOES IN - As they GROW UP, it is your responsibility to make sure their suitcase is NEITHER TOO LIGHT NOR TOO HEAVY for them.

Today, I would say most parents ERR ON THE SIDE of making their child's suitcase TOO LIGHT! - We give them LESS RESPONSIBILITY then than need to be carrying!

Often we even CARRY THE WHOLE THING FOR THEM! - Kids are A LOT LIKE ADULTS - if they think you will CARRY THEIR SUITCASE, they will CERTAINLY LET YOU!

As the Principal of a school, WOW, do I see a bunch of parents MAKING THIS MISTAKE - Carrying responsibilities that BELONG TO YOUR KIDS!

WHEN YOU CARRY your child's suitcase for them, You think you are BEING LOVING - But, your not - you are CRIPPLING YOUR CHILD - You are teaching them 2 BAD THINGS:

- (1) **You are communicating to them that THEY MUST NOT BE CAPABLE of handling their suitcase (to handle responsibility)** - they must be deficient in some way! - That they are NOT MATURE ENOUGH to handle this level of responsibility.

OR

- (2) **You are teaching them that SOMEBODY WILL CARRY IT if they don't** - Neither is TRUE!

Trust me - both are VERY BAD LESSONS for a child to learn - We call it ENABLING SOMEONE - we enable them to live life WITHOUT CARRYING THE RESPONSIBILITY that goes with it - THIS IS NOT HELPING THEM!

PARENTS, LISTEN CAREFULLY for the next couple of minutes:

Definition: **Parenting is the process of taking a child who is totally dependent on you for everything and then 20 years later releasing them into this world totally independent of you!**

How does this happen? - Parenting IS THE PROCESS of taking stuff from YOUR SUITCASE & TRANSFERRING IT to your CHILD'S SUITCASE.

You don't DUMP IT ON THEM - You slowly TRANSFER it to them over time - Step by Step you transfer responsibility for things from you to them.

The Process works like this:

- (1) **We TEACH (MODEL)**
- (2) **We MONITOR THEM doing it;**
- (3) **We TRANSFER it to them**

HOW LONG this process takes depends on the complexity of the job and the EAGERNESS of the child to take on responsibility - Some children CRAVE RESPONSIBILITY - Some child AVOID IT like the Plague!

Either way, we have to MAKE THE TRANSFER - Sometimes we may even have TO FORCE THEM to take it - Even if we have to STEP BACK and let them suffer a little!

This process begins the DAY THEY ARE BORN - and it is a NON-STOP process until the day they LEAVE HOME!

I HAVE 2 SUITCASES HERE - this is sort of how the PROCESS WORKS:

New Born - Empty Suitcase - Total dependence on you!

2 Year Old - Potty Training (Diaper)

3 Year Old

- WITH SOME TRAINING the Responsibility for Putting toys away BECOME THEIRS (Toys)

4 Year Old

- Sleeping in their own BED (Pillow)

8 Years Old

- With SOME OVERSIGHT the Responsible for Homework becomes theirs (Text Book)

12 Years Old

- Doing Own Laundry (Laundry Bag)
- Make own Lunch (Lunch Box)

14 Years Old

- Getting Yourself Up (Alarm Clock)
- Extra-Curricular Commitment (Ball)

Sixteen/Seventeen

- Driving (Drivers License)
- Part-Time Job (Stevie Be's Visor)

College

- Time Management (Day Planner)
- Managing Money (Check Book / Credit Card / Wallet)

Slowly OVER TIME it all goes from YOUR SUITCASE to theirs - if they REFUSE TO TAKE IT, well things GET DIFFICULT - You have to STEP BACK and LET THEM FAIL - and that is NOT EASY - but sooner or later THEY HAVE TO LEARN to carry their own suitcase.

THIS PRINCIPLE is true with EVERYONE we try to help - We can't CARRY THE LOAD God intended for them to carry - Yes, we help people carry THE HEAVY BURDENS of life - we are RESPONSIBLE to do this - but we must never begin to CARRY THEIR SUITCASE.

When we do, we ENABLE THEM to live IRRESPONSIBLY - God does not ENABLE IRRESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR - neither should we - When HELPING OTHERS NEVER DO for them what they should be doing themselves.

2 Thess. 3:10 - If a man does not work, he should not eat.

In other words, if you DON'T CARRY YOUR OWN LOAD, you need to GET HUNGRY - Getting hungry is GOD'S WAY OF MOTIVATING YOU to pick up that SUITCASE OF YOURS and start carrying it.

Mom & Dad, if that is you, PUT THAT SUITCASE DOWN - let that student get a LITTLE HUNGRY - let them FLOUNDER SOME - let them experience the GOD-GIVEN CONSEQUENCES of being irresponsible - Trust me when I say, A FEW HUNGER PAINS are quite motivating!

Most children are capable of carrying far more responsibility than we think they can! But . . . they won't carry it unless you expect them to! - They are just like us. Why do for yourself what someone else will do for you!