

On Godly Children

We often use Phrases like: Godly children, rising Godly children, leaving a legacy, Godly parenting, building value in our kids, children's ministry, God's Children, responsible parenting, etc. these are all catch phrases. Many say that people that have never had or raised children have no place to be teaching others about it. But that's wrong because the epistles, as is many of the books of the Bible, are full of Godly wisdom given by men who never had children. It is God's wisdom found in the Scriptures that we follow not the experiences of men.

1. Having children. (why, childbirth, newborns)
2. Raising, guiding, and teaching our children. (No TV, Internet, games, music, friends, clothes)
3. Letting your children go. (when?, how, life skills)

"And God blessed them [Adam and Eve], and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply..." (Genesis 1:26)

That God desires us to bear children. All people not just Christians its not predicated on whether you're a Christian or not. Bearing children is a biological function of the human body; designed by the Creator for women only.

Christians should bear children. God has not spoken on the issue of contraceptives in the Scriptures; however, this does not mean He is for it. Contraceptives **kill** the yet fully formed child. Using a contraceptive is in realty stopping a pregnancy; which is abortion in the earliest stage. God has said,

"Lo, children [are] an heritage of the LORD: [and] the fruit of the womb [is his] reward. As arrows [are] in the hand of a mighty man; so [are] children of the youth. Happy [is] the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate." (Psalm 127:3-5).

We are to **never abort** children. In our modern day there are many excuses as to why a couple will not continue to have children, they are neither logical nor Biblical if you can produce children, as God would

give you, there is **no** reason to not do so. In our day and age the question is asked can couples with fertility problems seek means medically to have children? (i.e. test tube, artificial insemination, surrogate, etc.) that is a very difficult ethical question to answer. Again, one would have to be very careful as to the particular method.

It has come to the point that the medical community has discovered how to create either a male or female fetus using such technology. One would not hesitate to condemn this practice for that is playing God. We can say we **are** to produce children it's a gift from God, and we are not to hinder nor abort that process premeditatively.

What about adoption? That is a wonderful option that would not be condemned. What better example do we have than that of God our Father adopting us (Galatians 5:4).

We are to produce and care for children

(Genesis 1:28; 3:16; 4:1,25,26; 6:1; 9:1,7; 16:4,5; 17:16,17;18:10; 21:1-4,7; 25:21,24; 30:5; Exodus 2:2; Leviticus 12:1-8; Judges 13:3-7,24; Ruth 4:13; 1 Samuel 1:20-24; 2 Samuel 11:5; Psalm 71:5,6; 113:9; 127:3-5; 128:3-6; 131:2; 144:12; 148:12; Proverbs Ch.31; Ecclesiastes 11:5; Isaiah 1:2; 11:8; 21:3; 26:17,18; 45:10; 49:1,5,15; 60:4; 66:7-13; Jeremiah 1:5,6; 4:31; 6:24; 13:21; 22:23; 29:6; 30:6; 31:8; 48:41; 49:24; 50:43; Ezekiel 16:4,5; 18:10(a), 14(b); Micah 4:9,10; Matthew 1:25; Luke 1:24,36,37,57; 2:7,21(b),23; 8:42; John 16:21; 1 Thessalonians 2:7,11; 5:3; Hebrews 11:11; 1 Peter 2:2; Revelation 12:2).

Couples can be childless for a time

(Genesis 15:2; 16:1; Judges 13:3; 1 Samuel 1:1,2; 2 Samuel 6:20-23; Psalm 113:9; Isaiah 32:11,12; 54:1; Luke 1:7,25,36,37; 23:29).

Adoption, foster parents, orphans

(Genesis 15:3; Exodus 2:7; Proverbs 23:10; Jeremiah 7:6; 49:11; Acts 7:21).

Children should be circumcised

(Genesis 15:3; Exodus 4:24-26; Leviticus 12:3; Luke 2:21).
There is the use of a midwife/nurse (Exodus 1:15-21; 2:7; Ruth 4:16).

No abortion

(Deuteronomy 21:31; 18:10; Psalm 94:21; 106:37,38; Proverbs 6:17;
Isaiah 49:15; 57:5; 59:7; 66:9; Jeremiah 7:6,31; 19:4,5; 22:17; 32:35;
Ezekiel 20:26,31,32; 23:37; Hosea 1:3-9; Matthew 2:16; Acts 7:19).

Children can be demon possessed

(Mark 7:25-30; Luke 9:38, 39).

Child Training

**"... Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not:
for of such is the kingdom of God."** (Mark 10:14)

The most important training we should give our children is the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word. It is our duty to train our children to be productive, useful, Godly men and women. God stresses, abundantly, the need for training our children in the ways of the Lord.

Today, many parents send their children into Sunday School classes because they have not, and do not, train them themselves.

Child training involves more than just the ways of God; it's training them, Biblically, to behave, be respectful, courteous, helpful, kind, loving, etc. We want to train our children to carry the Gospel and the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ into their generation. Let's not allow our children to be the vessels of 2 Timothy 3:1-4.

Adam should have trained his son better (Genesis 4:9).

We should not show favoritism (Genesis 25:28; 37:34).

We are to bring our children up in the ways of the Lord God

(Genesis 18:19; 21:20; Exodus 20:12; 21:15,17; Leviticus 19:3,17; 20:9; Deuteronomy 4:9,10; 5:16,29; 6:7; 12:12; 16:11; 31:12,13; Joshua 4:5-7; 22:23-29; Judges 13:3-7,24; 1 Samuel 2:18; 3:1,19-21; 2 Kings 12:2; Nehemiah 12:43; Esther 2:7; Job 1:5; Psalm 71:5,17; 78:4; 89:1,30-32; 90:16; 102:18,28; 103:17; 107:8,15,21,31 four times; 112:2; 119:9; 132:12; 144:12; Proverbs 1:4,5,8-19; chapter two; 3:11,12; chapter four; 6:20-29; 10:1,5; 13:1; 14:26; 15:5,20,21; 19:27; 20:7,11,29; 22:6; 23:19,22-26; 29:3(b),17; Ecclesiastes 12:1,13; Isaiah 54:13; 59:21; Jeremiah 2:9; 3:4; 32:39; Ezekiel 4:14; 18:19,20; 22:7; Daniel 1:17; Joel 2:15,16; Malachi 1:6; Matthew 7:9-11; 11:16,17; 18:1-10,14; 19:13,14,19; 21:28-31; Mark 9:36,37; 10:13-15; Luke 2:40,51; 7:32; 9:47,48; 11:11,12; 15:11-32; 18:15-17,20,21; Acts 7:20; 20:9; 21:9; 2 Corinthians 12:14; Ephesians 6:1-4; Philippians 4:7,8; Colossians 3:20,21; 1 Thessalonians 2:11; 3:4,12; 5:1,2; 2 Timothy 1:5; 2:22; 3:15; Titus 1:6; 2:6; Hebrews 12:5-11; 1 Peter 5:5).

Those not trained well

Genesis 17:1-4; 21:9; 1 Samuel 2:12,17; 2 Samuel 15:1-6; Job 19:18; Psalm 78:8; Proverbs 17:25; 19:13(a),26; 20:20; 22:15; 28:24; 29:3(b), 15; 30:11-14; Ecclesiastes 11:10; Isaiah 1:2; 3:12; 54:4; Jeremiah 3:24,25; 7:18; 17:2; 31:29; Ezekiel 16:44; 18:14-17,20; Micah 7:6; Zechariah 13:3; Matthew 10:21; 14:6-8; 15:3-6; Mark 7:9-13; 13:12; Luke 15:11-32; 1 Timothy 1:9).

Child Discipline

When it comes to the subject of child discipline many people are divided over it. We would all agree that children, at one time or another, will need discipline. Given the fact our sinful nature, which is corrupt even at birth, and the truth spoken in God's Word "**foolishness [is] bound in the heart of a child...**" (Proverbs 22:15a) children will need to be disciplined.

There are those today that believe a "non-physical" psychological approach to child discipline has been scientifically proven to be the better method. This is pure rebellion of God and His Word! God knows children better than we ever will. When we remove God's authority on all areas of life and practice, and replace them with anemic pathetic modern systems, we run the risk of a juggernaut against God.

In many cases when parents do not physically discipline their children, and refuse to heed God's instructions on this matter, God will leave them to their so-called modern methods which turn out to be a complete disaster. Some of the most arrogant, unruly, mouthy, selfish, mean, rude, prideful, rebellious brats have been products of the "modern methods." We have become a nation of arrogant people, so exalted in pride, so rebellious, that a whole generation is coming and will make the most unruly children look like softies! Pray for your children not among them.

What is discipline for? God designed His kind of discipline to change the wrong behavior into right behavior. It's for correction if one is left to his own with no correction he will surly turn into an unholy terror.

Children, like many adults, will take advantage of an opportunity to do wrong and hope to get away with it. What if God never disciplined you for any of the sins you committed? You would be lost and going to hell. When you come in contact with undisciplined children it isn't their fault; it's the parents. It's their lack of understanding and laziness coupled with this twisted thinking that science holds a lot of the answers. God help us when we begin to believe that God does not really have all the answers to life's problems.

God instituted severe discipline for the purging of that evil and rebellious mentality.

"If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and [that], when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son [is] stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; [he is] a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear" (Deuteronomy 21:18-21)

The principle of discipline is laid out here. **If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the**

voice of his mother... this could mean a daughter also; however, it was common that daughters were under their fathers and were very obedient to them. The individual **will not obey the voice of his father, or... mother** they have told him and told him **and [that], when they have chastened him** . Now they have moved into physical discipline, and still he **will not hearken unto them**. This is clear out and out rebellion of the first kind, what more can be done?

Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son [is] stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; [he is] a glutton, and a drunkard.

God, in the Old Testament, had set up a system. One, the parents were to correct the children even physical discipline. Two, if this step failed they were to bring him to the gate (the place of judgment) and before the elders for a review which upon such if the accusations were true. Three, they would stone him **and all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die**. Severe punishment for such a one. Do you think the parents were sad to see the execution of their son? Yes. We must remember it was after several attempts at reparation, and even the board of elders, that he was executed. It was not only for the son, but all the community **so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear**. This was not a cruel act, but retributive justice intended to be a deterrent for everyone, and into future generations.

We do not know the extent of benefit from this system of discipline during Israel's history, but we can say many would have thought twice about acts of rebellion. This system of discipline in that era was carried into the New Testament, in a less violent form, for the Church. (see Matthew 18:15-17.) Proverbs 20:20 speaks of this type of discipline. We read of the gross effects of weak discipline (Judges 17:1-4; 1 Samuel 2:22-25). We should have compassion and pity in the discipline of our children (Psalm 103:13; Hebrews 12:5-11).

God speaks of physical discipline for our children. It is the parents which do not physically discipline their children that are placing themselves above the knowledge of God and His care for us, and have unruly,

undisciplined, out of control children. This is a disgrace and weakness on their part. (Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13,14; 29:15,17.) Lets look at these discipline passages.

Notice these are all in the book of proverbs—a book exhorting us to practical manners based on observation of life. Many would say "well, that was the Old Testament, were in the New." Genesis 1:1 says **"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"** would one use the same logic there as with discipline passages? Of course not case closed.

"He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."

This passage speaks about any parent that **spareth** that is holds back, withholds, or refrains which many do today in a attempt to play this stupid psychological game, **his rod** what is that? A scepter, a staff, or a branch. This describes a rod (stick or branch from a tree) or the rod of a ruler either way it still describes discipline. If this is not done this man **hateth his son.**

In other words if you do not correct your child, by physical discipline, you are saying you really don't care for them, you really don't care what they do or how the behave. You are showing a lack of concern and love over how they may turn out. Conversely, it says **but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes. Chasteneth** means instruction, correction, chastise, discipline, or rebuke. **Betimes** means in good season, in good time, or at the right time. It's simple to understand God knows best follow His advice and you will witness great blessings.

"Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying" (Proverbs 19:18).

To **chasten** means to instruct, discipline, or correct but it also means to punish! This word in Hebrew is different from the one in Proverbs 13:24 adding the definition "punish." **Chasten thy son while there is hope** that is before they become so out of control and rebellious that it would be to late. In this punishment, one is not to **...let not thy soul spare for his crying.** In other words, don't feel bad when you are punishing them it's for their own good.

One of the worst things is when a parent punishes their child and right after, at the sight of their tears, runs and hugs them and kisses them and says something like "mommy, didn't mean it" what a mixed message! That kind of discipline is no good, and only leads to your authority as weak and unstable. Yes, we are to have compassion in punishment and there is a right way to render it firmly, lovingly, and authoritatively.

"Foolishness [is] bound in the heart of a child; [but] the rod of correction shall drive it far from him"(Proverbs 22:15).

Again, this speaks about physical correction for our children. In this case the actions and thinking which require discipline is qualified by **foolishness [is] bound in the heart of a child**. What will **drive it far from him? The rod of correction**. Again, we sense the reason for physical discipline—not to leave them in a state of foolishness or rebellion. It must be stated physical discipline must never be issued in anger; that is not discipline that's revenge. One disciplines a child to correct them; not to hurt them.

"Withhold not correction from the child: for [if] thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell" (Proverbs 23:13,14).

This passage reinforces the others and expands them to include real physical discipline. **Withhold not correction from the child: for [if] thou beatest him with the rod...** the word **beatest** does not mean what we generally apply to that word. It's to hit, strike, or smite not a tap and not a pounding! The degree is not mentioned only that physical spanking is to be used. If we do this what will happen? Two things **he shall not die...and shalt deliver** (recover, escape, rid rescue) **his soul from hell**. God is more concerned with a individual **NOT** ending up in hell, then a little discomfort for a short time.

" The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left [to himself] bringeth his mother to shame"(Proverbs 29:15).

Here again **the rod** of correction is spoken of. Additionally, **and reproof** that is a rebuke or correction what does this do? **Give wisdom**. Conversely, **a child left [to himself] bringeth his mother to shame**. The words **left [to himself]** mean free, or to let go this is when a

child is allowed to do whatever he or she wants without any corrective intervention from their parents. This **bringeth his mother to shame**. How many times have you seen a child let loose or wild and you say why doesn't his mother do something?

"Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul" (Proverbs 29:17).

Once again, God reminds us **correct thy son** when this is done then what? **He shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul**. Bless the Lord, pray that this will be the case with many of us.

X-men, ninja turtles, ninja warriors, power rangers, Teletubbies, VeggieTales, Harry Potter, tattoos, body piercing, unsupervised unfiltered internet access, filthy rap and rock music, the latest in clothing (the stupid baggy huge pants) dying their hair, satanic programmed computer games, video games, Myspace, Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok, etc. Do these things sound familiar? Does your child have, wear, or use these things? Do you as a Christian parent allow your child to have and wear these things in their life?

I'm criticizing and judging these things, but as only we Christians can—by the Scriptures. God's word must be the rule and authority for **every area** of our lives and our children's lives. I'm not writing this to go into great detail about the "things" we allow our children to do and have. It seems there's a book around every corner about how to raise our children. No, this message is not about that—it's about how we are contributing to the destruction of our children.

Please, let me say first that no one should call his or her children "kid" or "kids" a kid is a young goat. This is not an appropriate title to give or call our children they are our children not young goats! It's no longer a "devaluing or demoralizing" it has become the destruction of our children to their mind, body, and soul! I am absolutely convinced that the enemy of Christianity has been on a mission—a mission to dumb down and turn away our children from the truth and of patriotism. Remember, when dealing with your children, when saying no to their requests for worldly goods, when correcting them, your teaching them the things of God and of value. Let's see God's opinion on how important children are to Him and to us. Let's start at the beginning.

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." (Genesis 1:28)

The Hebrew word **fruitful** means to bring forth, make, or increase. He then says to **multiply** meaning to increase, enlarge, or more in number. God's plan is that Christians have children and have them in large numbers. He wants us to have children, but with that comes responsibility, correct?

He also says.

"Lo, children [are] an heritage of the LORD: [and] the fruit of the womb [is his] reward." (Psalm 127:3)

"Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put [his] hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 19:13,14)

"And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them." (Mark 9:36)

Understand God loves children. He gives them to us, and desires that we care for them. So what is the first important thing we must do?

"...Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 19:13,14)

We are to introduce our children to Jesus early on, and **"...and forbid them not."** The second responsibility is train up our children.

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."(Proverbs 22:6)

The word **train** means to initiate, discipline, or train up. We are to train up a child in the **way**—their manner of life. This way is the Christian life and truth. We must bring our children up in the Christian faith, and the teaching of Jesus Christ and the Bible. This is vitally important because

our children are our heritage in which we pass along the Christian faith. God says we should do this.

"And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." (Deuteronomy 6:7)

Notice, first that this is a command **thou shalt teach them diligently**. The verse covers all times of our life—**and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house** that is at meal times or talking. **And when thou walkest by the way** this is when traveling, or going in and out. **And when thou liest down** this is when relaxing at evening or before bedtime. **And when thou risest up** this is when rising in the morning.

We should be always teaching our children the Scriptures. However, today it's easier for parents to sit their children down in front of videos and television. Am I telling Christian parents to throw out the T.V.? You could because we have little time left until Jesus returns; pray He does not find you or your children in front of a T.V. when He comes. We will have to give an account for the way we raised our children. You may be saying, "Brother where is that in the Scriptures?"

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Romans 14:12)

"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things [are] naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (Hebrews 4:13)

Friends, you will answer for how you're raising your children. Do you not know they are such a precious and priceless gift? But some treat their dogs, clothes, and cars better! This should not be. Do you ship our children off to some obscure corner of a church building for "Sunday school" (which I detest) to learn what the instructor or curriculum tells them to learn? We give them baby talk Bible lessons, and then wonder later in life why they didn't know God's word. What is wrong with having them in the study with us? Who said we should segregate them? They are to hear God's word in order to have faith.

"So then faith [cometh] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17)

They will be built up in the faith if we teach it to them. We must tell them, but the problem many parents have is they can't teach their children because they don't know the Scriptures themselves! How much time do you invest in talking to your children about baseball, football, basketball, taking them to movies, amusement parks, video game rooms, etc.? How much time do you invest in teaching them the Scriptures?

We don't have a choice as Christians we have to be about training our children in the faith we must do it! We must not and cannot let the enemy take control of our children. Let's remember the spiritual warfare we are in.

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high [places]." (Ephesians 6:12)

Prepare for battle and arm yourself with the word of God, and give it to your children. God says in Ephesians 6:4.

"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

The word **admonition** means to put or lay in the mind. We are to be putting the Lord in the minds of our children not the other worldly ungodly trash. If you were to ask a child of a Christian home what is on his or her mind, most likely it will not be the Lord.

You may be thinking brother you're getting a little legalistic aren't you? What's so wrong with baseball cards, toys, computer games, play money, tattoos, etc.? Ok, ask yourself, are these things interfering with my child's Christian life? Are these things giving my child a poor Christian witness? Are these things drawing my child away from God instead of to Him? And are these things of the world? Every time you let a child have what he wants in the world you give a little of him to satan. Remember what the Holy Spirit said through brother John.

"Love not the world, neither the things [that are] in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15)

God wants you holy and your children holy as well. Don't let your children be into the world. One must remember the deceptions of the world are very strong. For example, look at so-called Christian music and how it's turned into a secular business with no regard to God and the Bible at all.

Let's see how God would have us correct the problems we have been discussing.

Step 1

Don't call your children "kids" they are your children not young goats.

Step 2

Give your children to God and don't withhold them from Him.

"...and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head." (1 Samuel 1:11)

"But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, [I will not go up] until the child be weaned, and [then] I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever." (1 Samuel 1:22)

Hannah gave up all that she had in her life--her only child. That's the picture of the unselfish sacrifice we need to do with our children to commit them to the Lord and let them appear before Him forever. Our children are God's anyway we read in Exodus 31:1,2.

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, [both] of man and of beast: it [is] mine."

The Hebrew word **sanctify** (*qadash*) means to be clean, sanctify, or dedicate. Present your child to God, and determine in your heart that you will do all you can to teach your children about Jesus Christ and the Bible.

Step 3

Make sure your child knows Jesus Christ as their saviour very early. This is important at any stage they may be in. see Matthew 19:14.

Step 4

Remove and do not allow your children to be exposed to the things of the world, and the covetousness that so easily binds them. Say no to those things that you know to be unbiblical and ungodly. Pray for wisdom and be obedient to the Scriptures.

"[Let your] conversation [be] without covetousness; [and be] content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (Hebrews 13:5)

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 12:2)

"Love not the world, neither the things [that are] in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15)

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great [is] that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold

to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matthew 6:19-24)

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." (Ephesians 6:1-3)

"Children, obey [your] parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." (Colossians 3:20)

Step 4

Finally, step four let's let Jesus tell us.

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second [is] like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40)