

Drug Abuse, Alcohol Intoxication and Raising Children

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I. GOOD CHRISTIAN PARENTING

Who is a Christian Parent?

A Christian is defined as a person who believes in the teachings of Jesus Christ and the belief that he is the son of God (OALD,2020).

A parent is defined as a person's father or mother (OALD,2020).

A good Christian parent based on the definition of a Christian from Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2020) is someone who raises up his children based on the beliefs and teachings of Jesus Christ (Eigege A. 2022).

Who is a Child?

A child is a young human who is not yet an adult (OALD,2020).

An adult is defined as a fully grown person who is legally responsible for their actions (OALD,2020).

Legal age is defined as the age when somebody has the legal rights and responsibilities of an adult (OALD,2020).

Raising up children as good Christian parents

What makes a good Christian parent?

Various factors have been attributed to good Christian parenting. These factors are socially and academically accepted as essentials to any good marriage and family. We will consider some of these factors as we build up our points on raising children, and the various challenges that reflect the realities faced by the modern day parent.

I'll be focusing on 8 grey areas that will not only enlighten you on the psychological build-up of a child, but will illuminate your mind on the reasons behind the different personalities we have in the society. Essentially, these areas are fields in our study that are encompassed by religion. This means these are areas that will be used to highlight the virtues of Christianity which are exhibited by the 21st century parent and the society at large.

These areas include;

- Childhood
- Value system
- Love and affection
- Education
- Sexuality
- Peers
- Superiority and Inferiority
- Money

CHILDHOOD

Childhood is defined as the period of somebody's life when they are a child (OALD,2020). We agreed earlier on that a child is someone who is not an adult. A child is someone within the age bracket of 0-18 years (Nigeria).

During the period of childhood an individual undergoes 3 phases of development which includes;

- Early childhood
- Middle childhood
- Late childhood



EARLY CHILDHOOD (0-6 YEARS)

Jeremiah 1:5 says " *Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations*" (NIV, 2011).

Having children is a gift from God, and any Christian reading this book should be conscious of the fact that God is aware of your existence. God formed you in order to execute his will and bring glory to his name. We are reminded that children are a prized possession from God in Psalms 127:3 which says " *Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him*" (NIV,2011). Also in Matthew 19:14 Jesus Christ said " *Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these*"(NIV,2011).

In the book of Mark 10:15 Jesus Christ said: " *Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it*" (NIV,2011).

These verses of the scripture are few of many others that emphasizes on little children. In Jeremiah 1:5, the Bible tells us that God knew you before you were born. This reflects the fact that two major attributes of a young child in the phase of early childhood are purity and innocence. These facts make this phase a very fragile phase that shouldn't be overlooked by any good Christian parent. This phase marks not just the physical and psychological growth but also the spiritual growth of an individual.

The Early Childhood phase is known to be the phase significant growth milestones occur. The major growth characteristics of this phase are the Physical Growth and Cognitive Growth.

PHYSICAL GROWTH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

The physical growth experienced by a normal child in this phase includes; learning to crawl, learning to walk and an increase in height and weight. Jean Zaar in chapter 7 of her book *Child Growth and Development* noted that: "Children between the ages of 2 and 6 years tend to grow about 3 inches in height each year and gain about 4 to 5 pounds in weight each year. The 3 year old is very similar to a toddler with a large head, large stomach, short arms and legs. But by the time the child reaches age 6, the torso has lengthened and body proportions have become more like those of adults. The average 6 year old weighs approximately 46 pounds and is about 46 inches in height. This growth rate is slower than that of infancy (ZAAR, J.,2021).

NUTRITIONAL CONCERNS OF CHILDREN IN EARLY CHILDHOOD.

In chapter 7 of her book titled *Child Growth and Development* (2021), Professor Jean Zaar stated that children within the age of 2 and 3 need about 1000 calories, while children from 4-8 need 1200-2000 calories a day. She also noted that "Preschoolers can experience iron deficiencies if not given well-balanced nutrition or if they are given too much milk as calcium interferes with the absorption of iron in the diet as well" (ZAAR,J.,2021). Regarding tips on how to establish a healthy eating habit in a child during this phase she said"

Don't try to force your child to eat or fight over food: Of course it is impossible to force someone to eat. But the real advice here is to avoid turning food into a power struggle so that food doesn't become a way to gain favor with or express anger toward someone else.

Recognize that appetite varies: Children may eat well at one meal and have no appetite at another. Rather than seeing this as a problem, it may help to realize that appetites do vary. Continue to provide good nutrition at each mealtime (even if children don't choose to eat the occasional meal).

Keep it pleasant: This tip is designed to help caregivers create a positive atmosphere during mealtime. Mealtimes should not be the time for arguments or expressing tensions. You do not want the child to have painful memories of mealtimes together or have nervous stomachs and problems eating and digesting food due to stress.

No short order chefs: While it is fine to prepare foods that children enjoy, preparing a different meal for each child or family member sets up an unrealistic expectation from others. Children probably do best when they are hungry and a meal is ready. Limiting snacks rather than allowing children to "graze" continuously can help create an appetite for whatever is being served.

Limit Choices: If you give your preschool aged child choices, make sure that you give them one or two specific choices rather than asking "What would you like for lunch?" If given an open choice, children may change their minds or choose whatever their sibling does not choose!

Serve balanced meals: Meals prepared at home tend to have better nutritional value than fast food or frozen dinners. Prepared foods tend to be higher in fat and sugar content as these ingredients enhance taste and profit margin because fresh food is often more costly and less profitable. However, preparing fresh food at home is not costly. It does, however, require more activity. Including children in meal preparation can provide a fun and memorable experience.

Don't bribe: Bribing a child to eat vegetables by promising dessert is not a good idea. First, the child will likely find a way to get the dessert without eating the vegetables (by whining or fidgeting, perhaps, until the caregiver gives in). Secondly, it teaches the child that some foods are better than others. Children tend to naturally enjoy a variety of foods until they are taught that some are considered less desirable than others. A child, for example, may learn the broccoli they have enjoyed is seen as yucky by others unless it's smothered in cheese sauce! (ZAAR,J. 2021).

Other sources of food required for the growth of children during early childhood are;

Calcium: Strengthen bones. Found in milk, yoghurt and seeds.

Proteins: This builds muscles. Found in eggs, beans, lean milk and cheese.

Carbohydrates: This provides energy. Found in bread, legumes, potatoes and apples.



COGNITIVE / PSYCOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

A major factor to be considered in the development of a child is their cognitive or mental development. This does not only reveal their level of personal progress or growth, but also gives the society the standards at which judgment and treatment of these individuals should be considered or carried out. According to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2020) Cognition is defined as " the process by which knowledge and understanding is developed in the mind".

In other words, we can define cognition as the learning process or intellectual buildup of a child. The rates at which a child learns, perceives, speaks, makes judgment, emotionally reacts and remembers are determined by a number of factors. In this book, we will consider three factors that affect the cognitive development of children in their early childhood using biblical passages to explain these factors. They include;

- Nutrition
- Environment
- Genetics

NUTRITION

We considered the nutritional requirements of children during their early childhood as stated by professor Zaar. Essentially, nutrition is very important in the cognitive, social and emotional growth of children at this stage. The early childhood phase which is a very essential stage for the development of a person, and very pivotal in determining the life outcome of that person shouldn't be treated with levity in regards to nutrition. The right and optimal amount of nutrients should be administered at this stage and over-nutrition and under-nutrition should be avoided.

WHAT IS OPTIMAL NUTRITION?

Optimal nutrition is the amount of nutrients which is considered sufficient and not insufficient or excess in requirements, needed to maintain a healthy growth and development.

NUTRIENTS REQUIREMENTS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Adequate nutrients are required for brain maturation and neurodevelopment via myelination. Myelination is essential for brain connectivity, which helps in cognitive and behavioral functioning. Hence an essential nutrient requirement during early childhood is;

Iron: Iron is a very important trace element that is required for growth and development. Iron is known to be directly involved in the production of myelin, which is known to be pivotal for cognitive development. Found in potatoes and most legumes, spinach and beef. Protein diets as well as carbohydrates are also very important for the growth of a child.

ENVIRONMENT

The environment any child finds him/herself has a big influence on their cognitive development. Theories by Piaget and Vygotsky beliefs have been relied upon across the century in the development of the thesis regarding the cognitive development of an individual.

According to Saul McLeod "*Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development suggests that intelligence changes*

as children grow. A child's cognitive development is not just about acquiring knowledge, the child has to develop or construct a mental model of the world (MCLEOD, 2022)".

JEAN PIAGET THEORY AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCE ON COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

According to Piaget, children actively build up their knowledge about the world. They are not passive creatures waiting for someone to fill their heads with knowledge. What Piaget wanted to do was not to measure how well children could count, spell or solve problems as a way of grading their I.Q. What he was more interested in was the way in which fundamental concepts like the very idea of number, time, quantity, causality, justice and so on emerged (MCLEOD, S. 2022).

THE PREOPERATIONAL STAGE OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT ACCORDING TO JEAN PIAGET

This stage falls between 2-7 years (which reflects early childhood) and is very essential in the intellectual development of a child. In this stage, Piaget claims that the thinking of a child is influenced by sight rather than logical thinking. He also claimed that a child is usually egocentric at this point in his/her development, and thinks everyone sees the world as he/she does.

Essentially, Jean Piaget explained that a child's cognitive development in early childhood follows a "trial-and-error" manner, and he believed experience plays a key role in the logical thinking and cognitive maturation of any child. This also implies that whatever a child believed, or thought to be true at a particular stage in Jean Piaget's theory, changes as he advances in age.

The preoperational stage of cognitive development involves some classical features such as pretend play, egocentrism, syncretism, animism and classification error which reflects the challenges that a child would face during their cognitive development.

VYGOTSKY'S BELIEF ON COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Vygotsky believed that three main concepts are related to cognitive development. (1) Culture is significant in learning, (2) Language is the root of culture (3) Individuals learn and develop according to their roles in the society.

Unlike Piaget who believed that intrinsic development stemmed from the child, Vygotsky believed that it is the language, writing and concept arising from the culture that elicit the highest level of cognitive thinking (CRAIN, 2005).

CULTURE

"Although Vygotsky acknowledged intrinsic development, he argued that it is the language, writings, and concepts arising from the culture that elicit the highest level of cognitive thinking (Crain, 2005)". Vygotsky believed that a child's frequent interactions with adults and more learned peers can facilitate a child's potential for learning.

LANGUAGE IS THE ROOT OF CULTURE

How is language the root of culture?

Let's start with understanding what culture is. Culture according to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2020) is defined as the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group. Language is believed to be the root of culture because that is the uniting factor that brings a particular group of people together. Secondly, language is the basis of learning and Vygotsky believed that language supported other activities such as reading, writing, logical and reflective thinking and reasoning.

Culture is unique to each individual and is created by their unique attributes and qualities, their language and prior experiences. Culture is a circle that is shaped overtime by unique events that is conveyed to the people present at that particular time. Vygotsky believed that as the culture influences an individual, that individual at the same time is creating culture. It is believed that one cannot learn a culture without first learning the language, and one interacts with a particular culture when he speaks the language of the person you are communicating with.

WHY INDIVIDUALS LEARN AND DEVELOP WITHIN THEIR ROLES IN THE SOCIETY

Vygotsky used the stages of childhood development to further explain the relationship between culture and learning. He explained that children are expected to develop elementary functions that are necessary for survival. Such functions includes: crying, a sense of mother's scent and familiar voices. However these are expected to disappear due to external stimuli. The new functions of the growing child are a result of

imitation, consequences and conditioning by others. The child's initial functions are replaced by problem solving skills such as reasoning and reflection. Problem solving skills or rather higher level thinking, are influenced by the culture of a particular society. Individuals are under pressure to adapt a particular model or pattern of living to suit the norms and etiquette of that society.

Children who will be accorded responsibilities or with high expectations are usually known to develop a sense of leadership and responsibility that others without pressure won't. They are usually under pressure to learn to carry out responsibilities that their peers would or should normally be exempted from. Such children are known to develop a faster thinking capacity than their peers.

Another important point Vygotsky made was the role of teachers in the psychological growth and maturation of children. He claimed that teachers have the ability to control many factors in the educational setting; ranging from tasks, behavior and responses. It is important we know that the more interactions an individual has with teachers and learned peers, the greater chances he has at developing a desire to learn and develop their cognition and thinking.

GENETICS

Another key point that is generally accepted as a major factor in the cognitive development of children is the "mother-child interaction", but for this book I'll like to stick to gene inheritance. In genetic engineering, it is known that a child's cognitive profile and intellectual abilities are carried on the X chromosome. This makes a mother most likely to be responsible for how clever her children will be. The father is less likely to be responsible for how clever his daughters will be.

MIDDLE CHILDHOOD (6-9 YEARS)

Two major features that characterize this phase in the development of a child are reasoning and development of intonation i.e *The rise and fall of the voice in speaking, especially as this affects the meaning of what is being said* (OALD, 2020). The age of reason according to the Catholic Church is 7, where it is believed that a child has reached the stage of moral responsibility and is entitled to receive Holy Communion.

Development of Intonation abilities marks the hallmark of language development in children of this phase. However the term intonation shouldn't be misunderstood for prosody which also develops in a child during this middle childhood.

INTONATION AND PROSODY

INTONATION	PROSODY
It is the rise and fall of the voice in speaking, especially as this affects the meaning of what is being said.	The part of phonetics that deals with stress and intonation as opposed to individual speech sounds.

Intonation is considered as the melodic facet of prosody, though the two are usually used interchangeably. It is a good question to ask how intonation is important to a child's development, and why parents should take their children's language development seriously.

The middle childhood phase is the period when a child begins to have meaningful social interactions and relationships. This is the phase when the child begins to converse with his teachers and peers on an educational level, generate social comparisons with his pair and begins to express himself with words. The intonation abilities developed in a child in this childhood phase enables him to properly express his speech, articulate and communicate properly among his peers. The medical significance of prosody or intonation development in middle childhood is strongly linked to the medical conditions (usually congenital), that begins to manifest during this phase of childhood. Such conditions include; autism, dyslexia, ADHD e.t.c

WHAT IS AUTISM?

The autism spectrum, often referred to as just autism or in the context of a professional diagnosis autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or autism spectrum condition (ASC), is a neurodevelopmental condition (or conditions) characterized by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and non-verbal communication, and the presence of repetitive behavior and restricted interests.

Individuals with this disorder usually present with an idiosyncratic intonation pattern, where they use little or no intonation at all. This usually leads to an unusual speech with no stress and rhythm. The M-CHAT (Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers) is used to evaluate for toddlers with this condition.

LATE CHILDHOOD (9-18 YEARS)

Late childhood is divided into two phases; The preadolescence period and the adolescence period. Adolescence which is synonymous to puberty is defined as the time in a person's life when he or she develops from a child into an adult (OALD, 2020). The World Health Organization defines an adolescent as a young person within the age bracket of 10-19 years. However, puberty is known to commence in most girls at age 12 and in most boys at 13 years. I will classify the period before the usual commencement of puberty as Preadolescence. This period is known to fall between 9-12 years.

PREADOLESCENCE (9-12 YEARS)

Preadolescence is the stage that marks the end of middle childhood and the beginning of adolescence.

It is usually marked with the early onset of puberty which includes features such as spermarche and menarche.

ADOLESCENCE (12-18 YEARS)

This is usually classified as the post- childhood developmental stage. The usual age at which someone becomes an adult is 18 though it may vary based on legal rights and country. If 18 will be taken as the minimum attainable age for adulthood that means the period of adolescence is overlapped by the childhood period. This means that an adolescent is a child.

This is the period that will be of focal point in our discussion on raising children because apart from development of secondary sexual characteristics this is the stage in which a child takes in ideas, has a fully developed capacity to reason, internalize thoughts and make independent decision.

This period which usually marks the beginning of sexual development makes a child more self-aware of himself and marks the stage of attraction towards the opposite sex. Adolescence marks the phase where personal hygiene sets in and desire for acceptance.



ROLE OF A GOOD CHRISTIAN PARENTS IN CHILDHOOD

The Bible says in the book of Proverbs 22:6 *"Start children off on the way they should go, and when they are old they will not turn from it (NIV, 2011).*

The middle childhood of a child marks the phase where a child attains the age of reason. Dana Dorfman, PhD, psychotherapist, and co- host of the podcast *2 Moms on the Couch* explained *"Around the age of 7, give or take a year, children enter a developmental phase known as the age of reason. The age of reason refers to the developmental cognitive, emotional and moral stage in which children become more capable of moral thought, have internalized a conscience and have better capacity to control impulses (than in previous stages).*

This explains to us that the role of a good Christian parent becomes active when his/her ward gets into the age of reason. Whatever culture, moral precepts behavioral pattern and ideas a parent wants to instill in his ward begins to take effect around the age of reason.

The Catholic Church has also placed emphasis on the need to nurture a child with caution around this period. Intellectual disability can prevent an individual from ever attaining this milestone.

WHAT A CHRISTIAN PARENT SHOULD DO DURING THE PERIOD

1- Lay emphasis on God: God is the creator and architect of our lives and destinies. When we fall, we rise by the grace and mercies of God, not the devil or any other medium. These are necessary principles and attributes that a child who has attained the age of reason should first inculcate.

A child in the middle childhood period shouldn't be conditioned to believe in himself. This is wrong, and it will lay the foundation of self-dependence and liberalism in a spiritually controlled and dominating society. This child is likely to miss out in attaining his/her full potential due to their suboptimal spiritual maturity and awareness. When a child grows up with this key virtue he/she doesn't need to say or emphasize on it to believe it.

2- Teach a child to believe in hardworking, discipline and diligence: These with emphasis on God are the broad categories of what a Christian parents should endeavor to inculcate in their ward and the chances of them turning out right will be high.

VALUE SYSTEM

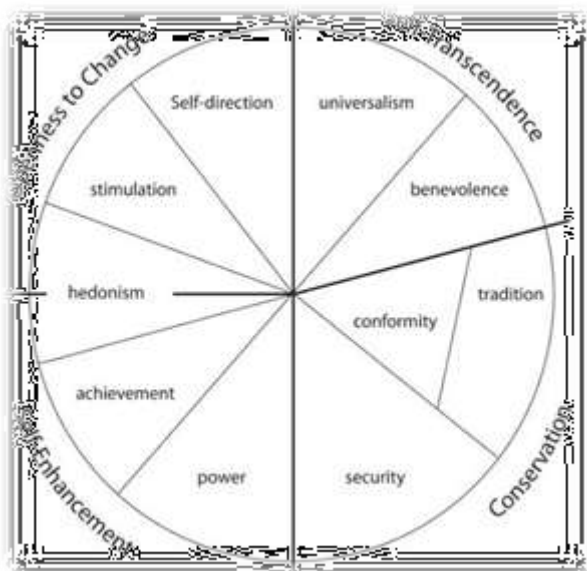
Value system according to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2020) is defined as "a set of connected principles that describe what people think is important and the correct way to behave". Now, let's focus on the part that says "what people think". This draws us back to Vygotsky's and Piaget's theories on culture that we have talked about earlier on in this book.

The value system of any child growing up can be influenced heavily by his/her Christian parents but most importantly by what the society accepts as norms and guiding principles. Take for example, a teenage girl growing up in a rural or urban community where teenage prostitution is encouraged due to poverty. This child may likely not reap the dividends and benefits of having Christian parents due to heavy influence of the society. This can probably influence or affect their core Christian principles in regards to raising their daughter.

Value system has a broad outlook and components that influence our daily lives and choices, and we will look at what Shalom Schwartz said about it.

Shalom Schwartz defined Value System using a set of ten universal human values that can also be seen as basic human needs that drive what we do. The universal human values according to Schwartz are:

1. Self-Direction
2. Stimulation
3. Hedonism
4. Achievement.
5. Power
6. Security
7. Conformity
8. Tradition
9. Benevolence
10. Universalism



WHAT DO WE TAKE FROM SCHWARTZ VALUES?

Value system- leaning heavily on tradition and propagated by conformity, is only brought about by willingness to change and stimulation. It has to exude pleasure, achievement and attainment of power (which are essentials for Self- Enhancement). General acceptance and the safety of the system will lead to its growth, and this will ultimately bring about universalism. Abraham Maslow, an American psychologist, said: *"It is quite true that [we live] by bread alone-when there is no bread. But what happens to [our] desires when there is plenty of bread and when our bellies are chronically filled?"*

In his pyramid of Hierarchy of Needs he omitted self-transcendence and only included it as the highest level of development in his later life. This suggests that many people (but not all people) actually undergo the period of self- transcendence in their later lives, after achieving their full potentials. It's important I state that our values or value system is based on our needs. The higher needs do not tend to appear until we have fulfilled the lower needs. If a person is hungry he/she won't worry about self-esteem, or being the top of his/her class.

A person who has food insecurity is likely to conform to a system that will guarantee him and his family financial and food security without making consideration on the guiding principles of his living as a Christian, or his beliefs.

CHRISTIAN VALUES AND THE HUMAN VALUES

We have talked about the human values, which are what leads to the value system of a society. What then do we consider as Christian values, and can these Christian values be the value system in a society. Christian values are the value system of a society. This is true only if the society is a Christian dominating society, or if the ethics of the Christian religion have been accepted as standard for acceptance and judgment. Christian values started long before the 10 commandments to the teachings of Christ in the New Testament and very importantly the message of the Apostles and also the epistles of Paul. The Bible tells us about the values expected from and in a Christian in Galatians 5:22-26. These scriptural verses lists the infamous "Fruits of the Spirit" which are the core Christian values expected to guide the lives of Christians. The passage says "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no LAW!

They verses bring to light the fact that we are under the law and not grace when we act in the flesh. Anywhere there is light, there is also darkness lurking to suppress the light. This brings us to the "acts of the flesh" which is perpetuated by people who are of the world. Galatians 5:19-21 which comes before the fruit of the spirit says and I quote *"The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissension, factions and envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God."*

LOVE AND AFFECTION

We all claim to know what love is but most of us don't love or really understand what love is. I won't use a dictionary to define what love is because love is Christ and Christ is love. A parent or parents who love Christ won't find it difficult to love their children and transfer this positive virtue to them. Love will go a long way to helping an individual attain a positive mindset towards others, the society and in building himself/herself as a right, fit and proper person. Teach your children to love and know Christ and they will know love. The Bible tells us in the book of 1 Corinthians 13:4-5 and I quote *"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others. It is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."*

Love never fails. But where they are prophecies, they will cease; where they are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror, then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known." (NIV,2011)

This aspect of life is explained further and in depth in my book titled *"Mind Control System of the World."*

EDUCATION

Education is the bedrock of every civilized and developed society and I agree. I haven't seen any society where the majority of its inhabitants are literate where social vices and ills are the norm. If you get educated and employment, you just get busy! An educated man has more freedom to make appropriate decisions regarding his own life choices and the judgments he makes regarding the welfare of others.

Education liberates a man, set him far away from ignorance and brings about social and financial responsibilities that enable him build himself as a person and the society at large. Education however should be encouraged but shouldn't be forced. Greek philosopher Socrates, in his educational theories believed learners should be given a choice to learn or not and education shouldn't be forced. In general, a society with more educated people should and will do better than a one without.

SEXUALITY

Emphasis on a child's sexuality usually begins or should begin at the onset of puberty until that child attains adulthood, and should be extended into marriage using various levels of strictness and caution. Children should understand their bodies and the various changes and no parent needs a doctor to educate his/ward about sexual development. It's important and will give an individual the right frame of mind to make judgment and avoid consequences that are irreversible. This is a major tool the devil uses in our society today against the teeming young population to lure them from salvation into desolation. The book titled "*The Mind Control System of the World*" gives an in depth insight into this very volatile aspect of humanity that has been exploited by The Devil and his agents into to exploit man of his glorious destiny and bring about perpetuation of a whole lot of other vices.

PEERS

At the beginning of this book I talked about peers, peer pressure and juvenile delinquency and how it affects a child's upbringing and outcome. A child's peers will always affect his view of life, decision, choices and overall life output. Parents' who place caution on who their children keep as friends and place importance on building godly, Christian friendship among their children are likely to avoid the problems that comes with juvenile delinquency, moral decadence, financial depletion, social ills and truancy. The first friends of every child should be his parents- who then will lead them to God, their Creator, makers of all men, and then their friend base should dwell around the church and like-minded Christians. This is important as it keeps them away from the allures and temptation of the Devil through negative peer groups.

SUPERIORITY AND INFERIORITY

Superiority Complex (SC)

A lot of things can be said about Superiority Complex but I'll just narrow it to the definition given in Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD, 2020) which defines it as "*a feeling that you are better or more important than other people, often as a way of hiding your feelings of failure.*"

Why should our children be afraid of failure? Why should parents nurture their children to be afraid of failure? That is the beginning of failure because it makes them opt out of uncertain situations that might have guaranteed their life success story. Don't teach your children to fear failing at trying at life tasks and events. Superiority complex has a lot of relations with personality disorders which I explained in the book titled "*Biblical Outlook of Marriage and Divorce.*"

Superiority complex in childhood has a lot to do with environmental and social factors which all span from parental upbringing or training styles. This defense mechanism subjects a child to depend on the success of his parents or his privileges in other to feel worthy. It usually is complementary to inferiority complex, especially when the former isn't easily applicable in any given circumstance.

Inferiority Complex(IC)

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD, 2020) defines Inferiority Complex (IC) as "a feeling that you are not as good, as important or as intelligent as others. It is usually complementary with Superiority Complex (SC) and associated with poverty or needfulness in many societies. It is wrong, as people from all social classes or societal hierarchy can be affected by this mental disorder. The major culprit to this condition is heavily dependent on the upbringing and parenting style of the parents. A combination of the factors listed above will help avoid this condition.

MONEY

Money is the root of all evil. That's true, when making a synecdochic statement in reference to the possession of it and the lack of it. The Bible tells us in the book of Proverbs 3:9 and I quote " *Honour the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruit of all your crops; then your barns will be filled with overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine* (NIV,2011)." The first step to attaining the favour of God is learning to honour God with the little you have as a child. Teach your wards to give their offerings!

The book of Ecclesiastes 5:10 says "*Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless* (NIV, 2011)."

The Teacher (who was Solomon) gave a very elaborate, practical and idealistic approach to life and wealth in the book of Ecclesiastes. I may not be a very huge fan of the life of Solomon but he had an unusual wisdom given to him by God. The value system parents inculcate in their ward will definitely solve the problems in regards to their approach to money.

Finally, the Bible says in the book of Matthew 19:24 and I quote *"Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."*

Money brings a lot of distractions so teaching your children on how to direct their interests will help them avoid the sins money can buy. As the popular saying goes *"Don't buy what will kill you."*

In regards to inferiority and superiority it's good to ask, who is more predisposed to having either of the two? Earlier I mentioned that Inferiority Complex is misjudged to having a relationship with poverty but that's not true and Superiority Complex misjudged to having a relationship with wealth. That is not true, as money doesn't determine how we are meant to judge ourselves but rather should be a means of alleviating the plight of other members of the church. It's God's money!



II. SINGLE PARENTING AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Olohi (not real name) is a young beautiful girl from Benue state in Nigeria, who was born into a monogamous Christian family with big dreams and aspirations. She grew up in a middle-class settlement and was provided with the basic things of life. She finished her tertiary education at the age of 21 and met the man of her dreams during a reunion hangout organized by her friends after graduation. She eventually got married and had her first two children in quick succession.

During her third pregnancy, calamity struck and she lost her beloved husband to a brief illness. She was pregnant and had to fend for two under-aged children, had little or no money left by her late husband to cater for her needs and those of her children and she was unemployed. She was tempted into getting married quickly to ease her financial burdens before God came to her through a Church retreat. She eventually had the opportunity to get a job offer through a member of the church and have been doing well financially ever since. However, her children (who are now adolescents) don't want any other man in their mother's life if he isn't their father. She is still young and still desires marriage and affection, and admits she needs assistance in raising her children who she feels may grow too powerful for her in the future. She believes she needs a male figure to

prevent her children from becoming social delinquents and truants.

Single parenting is not ideal for the welfare of children of any age group or social class. It denies them the privilege of a variety of parenting styles and the benefits of making diversified judgments. The fatherly and motherly presence is important in the upbringing of children and their judgments and perspectives of life are drawn from their parenting style. If a single parent brings up a child or children, their judgments will be based on how that parent raised them and lack of adequate supervision. A lot of ills and social vices are caused by the negative effects of single parenting and these negative effects will need to be highlighted in order to illuminate the adverse effects of single parenting.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF SINGLE PARENTING

The negative effects of being a single parent can be overwhelming and may affect the quality of life of both the single parent and the children. These negative effects include:

FINANCIAL CHALLENGES:

Having to cope with less or no money is a major and coming challenge experienced by most single parents, especially female single parents. Like the scenario of Olohi (who became a widow and not a divorcee), she was placed in a situation where she would get married for the sake of money and not ideally for the positive attributes of marriage which could lead to a lot of social and domestic challenges along the line. These financial challenges are the major reasons that lead to prostitution (among widows and divorcees) and bad role-modeling in parents subsequently leading to juvenile delinquency.

Other negative effects of single parenting include:

- Spending less quality time
- Multitasking and increased workload
- Relationship problems
- Negative feelings
- Behavioural problem
- Disciplining of children

A lot of these factors are discussed in *Biblical Outlook of Marriage and Divorce and Widowhood and Widowerhood*.

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

A Juvenile according to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD, 2020) is defined as "a young person who is not yet an adult."

A delinquent according to (OALD, 2020) is defined as "a young person who tends to commit crimes."

Juvenile Delinquency according to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD, 2020) is defined as "the problem of young people who are not yet adults committing crime."

I made a point earlier that some major problems of single parenting include financial problems, disciplining of children and spending

less quality time. These factors are the major causes of juvenile delinquency in many developing and developed societies of the world.

Juvenile delinquency- which I highlighted in the other books in these series is common in our societies, due to increasing incidence of divorce and reduced life expectancy due to the rising incidence of civil conflicts.

Children raised by a single parent(and have less contact with their parents and reduced family time) are prone to influences from their peers and society and when there is financial depletion they are susceptible to all sorts of social vices and crimes. The juvenile institutions which include; The juvenile courts, borstal centres, approved schools and remand homes which are very common nowadays. This is because the incidence of juvenile delinquency is on a steep rise and does not seem to be receding. The only way we can possibly cure this menace is to work on the value system of our teeming youth, encourage family and social work establishments that aim to strengthen family bonds(reduce incidence of divorce) and establish stricter laws against this menace. The Bible is the standard for every believer and according to what it says there is nothing new in the world.

People like Abel, Joseph, Caleb, Moses and David are recorded as people who during their youthful lives did well and caused positive changes in one way or the other. On the contrary, the attributes of juvenile delinquency were displayed in characters such as Cain and the daughters of Noah. The Bible reveals to us that our God is a God of peace, orderliness and love and therefore he negates juvenile delinquency

MORAL DECADENCE

The term can be described as being "morally bankrupt". There has been a steady decline in the moral, social and educational values of the youth or the juveniles. Moral decadence therefore is the failure to uphold sound morality in a society. The reasons behind moral decadence are no other than the rising incidence of juvenile delinquency, negative cultural values (whether celebrated or not), poverty, spiritual suffocation and the diminished will of government towards the menace.

The deterioration in moral standards and ethics is due to a failing society that spans from a corrupt and unwilling government, dishonest citizenry that have neglected the true meaning of religion in search for worldly passions and the rise of the antichrist movement. A country or a society that lacks the true values of Christianity would not be free of moral decadence. The religious institutions (particularly Christianity) are failing in this regard because we have departed from speaking the gospel as it is to running the church as a business enterprise. This is not surprising to say that this is a major reason that the antichrist movement gained some grounds throughout the beginning of the 21st century. The various forms moral decadence exists include;

- Cultism
- Sexual violence and disorientation (Rape, student prostitution, Teenage Pregnancy, Homosexuality, LGBTQ movement e.t.c)
- Examination malpractice Drug and alcohol abuse(Substance Abuse)
- Robbery, theft and killing
- Disrespect for elders and constituted authorities e.t.c

More so, according to the census bureau of 2010, urban areas represent densely developed territory, and encompass residential, commercial and non-residential urban land uses. Rural areas encompass all population, housing, and territory not included within urban areas. However, sex, the sum total of structural, functional and behavioural characteristics of organisms that are involved in reproduction, marked by the union of gametes and distinguished into males and females plays a major role in the social structure and behavioural pattern of a society. Idensi (2010) asserted that moral decadence is reported indifferent in societies and culture of industrialized world compared to non- industrialized world and that behaviours denoting immorality such as rape, sexual abuse, drug abuse, school violence and killing. He also stated that "This hydra-headed cancerous menace is not without a cause." Ezaka(2013) stated that immorality has persisted in our society because many citizens no longer fear God.

Idensi (2010), Ihenacho (2010), and Uwaegbute (2013), stated that practical observations have shown that Christianity have identified phenomena like the influence of cultural background, poverty, western education, westernization and urbanization as contributing immensely to moral decadence. Odeh (2013) further stated that the causes of moral decadence among youths can be categorized into;

- i. social factor, which include peer pressure, unstable and home environment
- ii. Economic factor; which has to do with poverty
- iii. Cognitive factor which include need for belonging among the youths driven by physical needs and psychological needs and intellectual decline
- iv. Technological factors, which include media and internet.

The Bible maintains in Proverbs 28:2 and I quote "*When a country is rebellious, it has many rulers, but a ruler with discernment and knowledge maintains order* (NIV, 2011).



III. SUBSTANCE ABUSE, GANGSTERISM AND OCCULTISM

Substance abuse is divided into various forms such as alcohol intoxication, drug abuse, drug overdose, drug misuse and drug addiction. Substance abuse is the habit of taking too much of a harmful drug or drinking too much alcohol. It is a major problem of the adolescent child that usually begins at adolescence and can proceed into adulthood. This can be a major problem of an individual and can affect the quality of this individual's health, life achievement, quality of life, marriage quality, financial management and social status.

Alcoholism and drug abuse thriving among the youth is an indication of a rising moral decadence, and a reason for proactive measures from the health sector and government to curb the menace, institute proper morality among the citizens and return the citizenry to the most proactive, optimal mental and physical health state possible. The tendency to give into substance abuse has a strong link with upbringing and parental guidance. A healthy family relationship that is devoid of divorce and where the bonding time is adequate may escape the scourge of substance abuse.

Teenagers who have less quality time with good Christian parents, and are under limited supervision usually get influenced by negative peers and may abuse substances at various points in their lives. Some other conditions like poor academic performance, feeling inadequate, society and financial pressure can predispose a young person to abuse substances. Some of the negative side effects of substance abuse include:

FINANCIAL CHALLENGES:

Substance abuse predisposes an individual and his family to a potential financial downturn. Economic mishap is eminent as abusing substances leads to addiction and dependence, which will affect the financial state of the individual and his family. Health challenges that result from these habits may severely affect the family as well as the individual involved.

HEALTH CHALLENGES:

Health challenges develop from drug or substance addiction. Drug addiction is a progressive disease indicated by the inability to control the use of legal or illegal drugs. The term "substance use disorder (SUD)" is mainly used to refer to drug addiction. The causes of drug addiction in society are interwoven into genetic, environmental and developmental factors. The effects of drug addiction are physical, psychological and social. Drugs change a person's appearance, increase the risk of various health problems (e.g chronic pancreatitis) and aggravate existing medical conditions. Some clinical effects of drug abuse include;

Central nervous system-Stroke, mental confusion, delirium, lack of orientation in person time and place, seizures and brain damage, major depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Digestive system- chronic pancreatitis, esophageal cancer, gastric cancer, colon cancer and rectal cancer
Respiratory system- Lung cancer, emphysema, bronchiectasis and other respiratory conditions.

The characteristics of substance addiction in our teeming youth are; inability to stop, changes in mood, appetite, sleep pattern and lack of basic care for self. These attributes affects an individual's prestige, self-worth, value system and predispose these teenagers and young adults to a long list of other social vices.

RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS:

A person who gets stuck using a substance and develops addiction will have a relationship problem with his/her family and others as well. Drugs affect the brain and these impair someone's sense of judgment, affecting the quality of their relationships as their level of attachment with their loved ones decline. Their social status is affected as using substances makes one susceptible to social embarrassment and finally when depression sets in they can no longer fend for themselves or their loved ones. Alcoholism and substance abuse are major causes of the rising incidence of divorce and separations in our generation.

GANGSTERISM AND OCCULTISM

If I was a virologist, I'd consider these two as the prion diseases of humanity. It is this very menace that is perpetuated from the kingdom of darkness that has put true Christians on the edge of their seats and through which other vices and social challenges are majorly elicited. A gangster according to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD, 2020) is defined as "*a member of a group of violent criminals.*"

Occult is referred to as "*connected with magic powers and things that cannot be explained by reason or science* (OALD, 2020).

These definitions have clearly distinguished or separated gangsterism from occultism, though they are usually related.

Gangsterism has nothing to do with occultism by reason of the definitions and simply starts from juvenile delinquency and societal and moral decadence. Occultism on the other hand, is related to spiritual matters and

things that are related to devilish worship and agenda. However, occultism can utilize gangsterism as a means of propagating its agenda and of achieving its purposes. Gangsterism has no course or well-defined purpose but simply evolved from family and societal factors that span from family disputes, damaged marriages and blood wars. Other factors that have influenced the rise of gangsterism in our society include society injustice and inequity, government incompetence to meet up with the demands of the people, other social vices, lack of purpose or ambition, school dropout and many more.

Occultism, which is as old as the fall of man reflects the existence of a life beyond the physical. A life that controls everything that you see around and hear. The Bible tells Christians in the book of Ephesians 6:12 and I quote " *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms* (NIV,2011). This brings to light the fact that the leadership in the world do not shy away from occultism and majority of the policies we experience as regular are influenced by the negative desires of satanic worship and the occult. The occultic world may not reflect machismo and physicality as gangsterism, but rather utilizes the tripartite nature of man consisting of his body, soul (conscious intellect, will and emotions) and spirit against us to leads us astray. The primary goal of the Devil is to steal, kill and destroy and the only weapon he has against us is what we hand him with.

Occultism is very common among young adults, teenagers and even children. A foundation built on the teachings and guidance of our Lord and savior- Jesus Christ, and the books of the Holy Scriptures can help parents avoid the mishap that comes with graves consequences (even at the expense of their lives), if the begin to teach their children to draw their values and beliefs from the Bible and the Word of God.

A lot more on this topic will be discussed in the book "*The Mind Control System of the World*". But to summarize this aspect in this book I'll quote what Watchman Nee, a famous chinese church leader and author who describes the battle for the mind as follows: "*According to the Bible, the mind of man is unusual in that it constituted a battlefield where Satan and his evil spirits contend against the truth and hence against the believer. We may illustrate as follows. Man's will and spirit are like a citadel which the evil spirits crave to capture. The open field where the battle is waged for the seizure of the citadel is man's mind. Note how Paul the Apostle describes it: 'though we live in the world, we are not carrying on a worldly war, for the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ (II Cor.10:3-5).'*" He initially tells us of a battle-then where the battle is fought-and finally for what objective. This struggle pertains exclusively to man's mind. The Apostle likens man's arguments of reasoning to an enemy's strongholds. He pictures the mind as held by the enemy; it must therefore be broken into by waging war. He concludes that many rebellious thoughts are housed in these strongholds and need to be taken captive to the obedience of Christ. All these plainly shows us that the mind of man is the scene of battle where the evil spirits clash with God....When firmly held by Satan the mind of man becomes 'hardened;' man follows the desires of the body and mind (as) 'children of wrath' and so 'is estranged and hostile in mind' because 'the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God.' (II Cor.2:14; Eph. 2:3; Col 1:21; Rome 8:7)

"Upon reading these various passages we can see clearly how the powers of darkness are especially related to man's mind, how it is particularly susceptible to Satan's assault With respect to man's will, emotion and body, the powers of evil are helpless to do anything directly unless they first have gained some grounds therein. But with man's mind they can work freely without initially persuading man or securing his invitation. The mind appears to be their possession already. The Apostle in comparing men's minds to the enemy's strongholds seems to imply that Satan and his wicked spirits already have established a deep relationship with the minds of men, that somehow they are using them as their bastions in which to imprison their captives. Through man's mind they impose their authority and through the minds of their captives they transmit poisonous thoughts to others that they too may rise against God. IT IS DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE HOW MUCH OF THE WORLD'S PHILOSOPHY, ETHICS, KNOWLEDGE, RESEARCH AND SCIENCE FLOW FROM THE POWERS OF DARKNESS. But of one point we are certain; all arguments and proud obstacles against the knowledge of God are the fortresses of the enemy.

"Is it strange to behold the mind in such close proximity to the authorities of wickedness? Was not the sin which mankind first committed that of seeking the knowledge of good and evil, and that at the instigation of Satan? Hence man's mind is especially related to Satan. If we were to pursue the Scriptures carefully and to observe the experiences of the saints we would discover that all communications between human and satanic forces occur in the organ of thought. Take for instance, Satan's temptation. Every temptation with which he entices man is presented to his mind. It is true that Satan often uses the flesh to secure the consent of man, yet in each instance

of enticement the enemy creates some kind of temptation and thoughts. All temptations are offered us in the form of thoughts...

"The original definition of repentance is none else than 'a change of mind.'..."

"But even following repentance the believer's mind is not liberated totally from the touch of Satan. As the enemy worked through the mind in former days, so today he will work in the same manner. Paul, in writing to the Corinthian believers, confided that he was afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ (II Cor. 11:3)." The Apostle well recognizes that as the god of this world blinds the minds of unbelievers so will he deceive the minds of the believers..... The Mind is the easiest avenue for them to accomplish their purpose. Eve's heart was sinless and yet she received Satan's suggested thoughts. She was thus beguiled through his deception into forfeiting her reasoning and tumbling into the snare of the enemy. Let a believer accordingly be careful in his boast of possessing an honest and sincere heart, for unless he learns how to repulse the evil spirits in his mind, he will continue to be tempted and deceived into losing his sovereignty of his will. pp.7-10

"God wishes to restore our thoughts life to the excellent state it had when He created it so that we may not only Glorify God in our walk but may glorify Him in our thinking as well. Who can estimate the multiplied number of God's children, who die neglecting their mind, grow narrow, stubborn and obstinate, and even sometimes defiled. They fall short of the glory of God. The Lord's people need to know that if they want to live a full life their mind must be renewed. So whenever a child of God notes that he is no longer able to govern the mind, he ought to perceive at once that it is the enemy that is managing it..."

God's intention is for man to control himself. Man has the authority to regulate his every natural endowment: hence his mental processes should be subject to the power of his will. A Christian ought to inquire of himself. Are these my thoughts? Is it I who am thinking? If it is not I thinking, it must then be the evil spirit who is able to work in man's mind. The person should know that in case he has not intended to think and yet there are thoughts arising in his head, he must conclude that these are not of him but of the evil spirit. "pp.12-13 I would like to admonish you as a Christian parent to follow the instructions of the Bible and train up your children in the way of the Lord, and when they are old they will never depart from it. Listen not to the chatters of the dead, for they desire the soul of man. Their feelings are lost in death and they do not desire your pleasures. The Teacher (King Solomon) said this and this you should heed. Heed to the teachings of the Bible and save yourself from annihilation.



IV. SOCIETAL EFFECTS AND IMPLICATION ON CHRISTIAN CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The effects of moral decadence and all its various components will have effect on a Christian youth who is not deeply rooted in matters relating to his or her spiritual matters. It has been observed that immorality is on the rise. Ethics as a way of ordered living which propagates ideal standards of living and healthy human relationships is dwindling. The concern in several sectors of societal life is that the rising rate of immorality may lead to breakdown of law and order. An ideal society is that which is devoid of violence, civil unrest and with minimal crime rates. The paediatricians and social workers define "Youth" as the period between childhood and adulthood.

The Bible had recorded a lot of instances where youth were used as a vessel by God to perform great deeds. But this is the period the devil and his agents like to exploit in the lives of people and lead them away from God. As Christian youth the antics and schemes of the Devil will be directed heavily towards you as a

person but as the Bible says in the book of 1 Timothy 4:12 and I quote *"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity (NIV, 2011)."*

Moral decadence is a dangerous tool that must be checked. Our modern churches of recent have derailed from the primary purpose of the Church to glorify God and have taken on secular ideas and brought into the church to the detriment of the modern Christian youth. A good number of youth who are active in the modern day church are openly involved and participating in biblically certified sins and that is not frowned at-it is even becoming a norm. There is a belief among young adults or Christian youth that it is impossible to remain morally pure till marriage. The peer pressure from peer groups on the Christian youth when they leave home haven't helped abate this belief which is perpetuated from the pits of hell. This has been a major reason for the rise in the incidence of moral decadence. Those in higher institutions are finding it difficult not to become involved in sexual activities and there is a steep rise in the act of cohabitation, drug abuse, campus prostitution, cultism and a lot more.

The church has to go back to the drawing board and reassess its priorities relating to spiritual matters. I believe if we start cleaning the Christian way of life from the home front and the church through biblical and godly doctrines we will go a long way in curbing this menace of moral decadence among our youth

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V. CONCLUSION

My final charge to parents, the Church, the Christian youth and the child is to love God and keep his commandments. For that is the whole duty of man. If we consciously and unconsciously heed to the Word of God, the worldly passions will unwittingly not attract us from Christ. It is my desire that this book will enrich your spirits in these trying days and may the God of peace guide you, keep you and your family and enrich you with his abundant grace and mercy. Amen.

Abel Amedu Eigege

