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SABBATH CONFERENCE PANEL PRESENTATION

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The Sabbath & Children

by Geoff Robertson

I chose my topic today in the hope to create some discussion on what I believe to be a critical aspect of Sabbath observance – children.

1 Corinthians 13:11 *When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.*

Cultivating adulthood is not an instantaneous thing, and maturity takes a lifetime of learning and parental instruction; it must start as a child.

I understand that in our midst are some 3rd, 4th, even 10th generation Sabbath keepers. No doubt, these people are worth hearing from. I'm second generation, having been a Sabbath keeper since I was 7.

Exodus 31:13 *Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you.*

Proper observance of the Sabbath(s) therefore helps us to know God – not just that He exists, but knowing about Him, about what He is doing, what He is like.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 *Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: (24) But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.*

God wants us to take delight in knowing Him and the Sabbath is a tool specifically for this purpose – It helps us identify and know our great God.

It is paramount that a child is taught by their parents or guardian to not only keep the Sabbath, but to use it as a *means* by which to come to **know God**.

At some point in your child's development (8yrs?), each parent should begin to ask -- **WHY** is my child keeping the Sabbath? -- *is it only because it's our family or Church tradition? Or, -- is it because they are beginning to find, through keeping the Sabbath, a growing knowledge and love for God and our Lord Jesus Christ?*

The challenge of Sabbath keeping is to turn the **hearts** of our children to God, not just their outward ritual behaviour.

Proverbs 3:1 *My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments.*

- On the Sabbath, we can do things with our kids that generate *heart and mind development* of God & His Word. E.g. We can create interesting studies and talk about things of God & creation. We can play Bible games, create interesting Bible-

based projects, or go to a museum and talk about the things you see. Create personal achievements and a reward system.

Read through **Proverb 3:2-10** noting the blessings – Are your children convicted in their hearts of the blessings God’s way will bring to them?

*(Pro 3:2) **For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.***

*(Pro 3:3) **Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:***

*(Pro 3:4) **So shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man.***

*(Pro 3:5) **Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.***

*(Pro 3:6) **In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.***

*(Pro 3:7) **Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.***

*(Pro 3:8) **It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.***

*(Pro 3:9) **Honor the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:***

*(Pro 3:10) **So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.***

These are the benefits of keeping the Laws of God. Each parent will decide the practical ways to convict their children of these things, but they must do it for the spiritual welfare of their family if their children are to come to know God, and understand the things in which He delights.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT & CHARACTER BENEFITS OF SABBATH KEEPING

- A God-centred disposition, respect toward the sovereignty and things of God (*holiness*).
- The constant cycle of the Sabbath provides a continual awareness of God.
- Respect of the rights of and liberty of others
- Development of self-control and restraint.
- Sabbath keeping can be a faith building and testing exercise.
- Knowledge of God’s overall plan of Salvation
- Knowledge of God’s concern for humanity, and desire for men to be free and happy.
- Understanding of God’s way of love toward others.
- Realisation that the Law of God is a blessing & guide to a happy and successful life.
- Importance of time management

Fundamentally, the Sabbath is about coming to know Who and What God is. I believe if a child truly learns this he or she will spend their life in awe of Him and in constant pursuit of His will. The Sabbath offers children a life gateway to God, and is even more meaningful to us than any other generation in the history of civilisation, as never before have children had so many distractions that would steal their heart from loving God.

Train and prepare your child’s heart for God by using the Sabbath as it was intended. Give them joy, laughter on the Sabbath, give them focus, and make the Sabbath HOLY, and they will delight in it for the rest of their lives.

Further thoughts

Exodus 20:10 *But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:*

-- Children are integral to the Sabbath command, parents are commanded to give their sons and daughters rest on that day, i.e., not to burden them with the cares of this world. Thus they are to receive and understand the blessing of the Sabbath.

It is a parent's responsibility to teach their children, not the Church's.

Deuteronomy 32:46 *And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law.*

-- Don't be afraid to *command* your children. Don't be afraid of setting a high standard of Sabbath keeping, including restrictions. Use the rule – *is this conducive to the meaning of the Sabbath?*

-- Set the example, your children will imitate!

PRACTICAL ASPECTS CONCERNING CHILDREN & SABBATH

- Kids don't need rest from work as might parents, but they do need time out from their daily pursuits to put their lives into focus.
- Children will need reminding of the Sabbath.
- Vital to teach children *understanding* if they are to gain *wisdom*. Understanding & wisdom in relation to the Sabbath will bring about a love of God.
- The Sabbath is the opposite of slavery – don't make you children slaves on the Sabbath. Find ways to make them laugh.
- Try to make them happy on the Sabbath. Use smiling, and humour/laughter as a gauge if your children are enjoying the Sabbath.

BACKGROUND OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATIONAL SERVICES (AUSTRALIA)

Who are we? -- In early 1994 my wife and I left the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) over doctrinal differences largely relating to its decision to reduce the Law of God to a religious culture for an ancient people. We were very impressed with the ministry of an American, Ronald Dart, also formerly of the WCG, a particularly gifted and insightful preacher who had been very helpful to us personally. Believing his ministry could also benefit many of our brethren and others who may be struggling with the strong winds of doctrine that were blowing at that time, a group of us established a service ministry in Australia that had the permission to distribute his excellent materials, and also work to support and encourage educational forums that we believed would help God's people.

CESA is mostly a volunteer service which supports people within Australia, New Zealand and Asia. Our motive is to help preserve the Truth, support brethren Biblically, and work toward a greater sense of unity within the Body of Christ. We endeavour to provide all our recorded messages free of charge, and without obligation of any kind.

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Director

