

# Model of Christian Education And the Importance of Family

ROMAN KRÁLÍK

*Just a short while,  
then I have won.  
Then the whole struggle entirely disappears.  
Then I can rest in halls of roses  
and talk  
with my Jesus without ceasing.  
Søren Kierkegaard*

*The most exciting adventure for a mother or father is to see her or his children grow up, becoming mature, and to follow their first steps in life. Parents should have a clear vision of education and upbringing based on true love and particular rules that children have to follow.*

## Family Roots

Clearly, there is an enormous difference in theory and practice. Each book that deals with the upbringing and education of children offers different methods and theories and presents them as the only correct ones. But there is one thing that should be stressed—children are not experimental material. They are not laboratory animals designed to be experimented on with various methods of education and upbringing. The best method is to find enough time to design the structure of family upbringing very deliberately, involving lots of love and rich imagination. The deeper the family roots, the happier the children. Happy children will be more likely to obey their parents and accept family rules. At the end of the day, it will positively influence

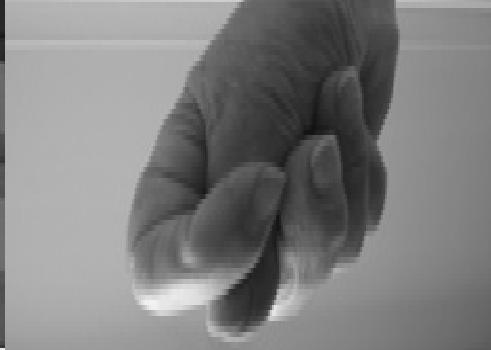


Roman Králík (1973) studied pedagogy, philosophy and theology in Banská Bystrica and Nitra, Slovakia, and in Prague, Czech Republic. He has twice obtained the Jonathan Stenseth – Stipendium in the USA (2004, 2007) and took part in a research programme at St. Olaf College in the Hong Kierkegaard Library. He has published a number of articles dealing with the Danish thinker Søren Kierkegaard. In 2005 he established the Kierkegaard Collection in Slovakia in ŠaDa, which is the only specialized library of this kind in Slovakia. He is the founder and the chairperson of Kierkegaard Society in Slovakia. He has a doctorate in theology from HTF UK in Prague. He is the author of the published monographs *Problém zvaný Kierkegaard* (The Problem Called Kierkegaard) and *Zápas Sorena Kierkegarda* (The Fight of Søren Kierkegaard) in 2006. His mail address is [kierkegaard@centrum.sk](mailto:kierkegaard@centrum.sk).

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their personality. As children grow, they become more self-aware and aware of parental love—they are loved and they love in return. They realise how to behave and what they are expected to do and so there are almost no “big” problems to deal with.

However, a healthy family background is the essence of all relationships and upbringing as such. Family must be an oasis of safety and peace. It is conditioned by the following: enough time spent with the children, focus on the children and richness of ideas. If any of these are missing, family and marriage become like poison.

Moreover, other elements can influence children negatively: teachers, kindergarten, schoolmates, friends, magazines, computers, TV, spots and adverts, cinema, internet. These are the elements that have rather strong impacts on their individual development. The development of children progresses rapidly, especially at the pre-school age, and many parents are not able to notice the changes and react fast enough, nor do they know what to do. All of a sudden children have grown-up and parents are sorry to have missed the most exciting moments in their children’s lives.

## **Upbringing**

Education and upbringing are the activities that form the personality of an individual, her or his character and behaviour towards the others, material and spiritual values and society. Children are born with no instructions on how to be brought up, with no manual of how parents should deal with them. Each individual must face the task and learn to find her or his individual way of upbringing and find the correct (or the most suitable) method. There is no universal method, no formula applicable in each and every case.

The role of the family is crucial in the upbringing process. Family forms the fundamental approaches and attitudes of children. Though the influence of family is declining, its influence is still crucial in the life of the individual. Family provides its members with particular atmosphere, spiritual background and values to employ. Family teaches the child to take care of her or himself and, above all, to distinguish between good and bad in general. Children must be taught something more than the values of truth, hard-work and such. A





child should learn to forgive and to help others. Materially oriented parents want their children to have the most of the best things in the world and the result of this is the general discontent of their children. According to Larry Crabb, “young people are fully aware of the emptiness of their parents’ values (such as money, credit, good job). Providing a valuable upbringing and education is demanding and is associated with discipline and self-education of parents.”<sup>1</sup>

## Happiness

Family is the strongest factor in determining the happiness, safety and harmony of a child. Family also forms a child’s approach to classmates, siblings and to adults. Moreover, the family influences a child’s school results, too.

Children’s requests are quite simple: they are thirsty for love and safety, their innermost desire is to achieve credit for their abilities. Parents often find these requirements quite difficult to fulfil. They often say that they were not given any of the mentioned and so they do not know how to offer them to their children. Others are simply overworked; they hardly find a few minutes to check their children’s homework.

A pleasant atmosphere, fun and love are the crucial elements in the life of a family. These elements help to sustain the order and rules within the family. Parents should be aware of using irony—it is very destructive. Good family atmosphere is maintained only if children respect and admire their parents and parents will credit them and take them seriously.

Respect and credit are phenomena that cannot be demanded. If a parent is not self-satisfied, they tend to mistreat the child. Therefore parents must control their

behaviour and anger. If children find out that parents tend to lose their self-control and become angry, they stop respecting them. Parents lose their authority. Parents should be strict in determining the limits and rules for children. They also should be able to moderate or remit the punishment. If a child feels that the punishment has not changed the attitude of the loving parent, upbringing becomes much easier. If the child does something wrong, it is necessary to tell her or him immediately what she or he did wrong and why. It is important to educate the child by talking and explaining instead of through punishment. Dobson remarks: "Physical punishment is saved only for the moments of waywardness and intentional misdoings of the child which is old enough to realise his deeds." Parental authority must not dwell only in greater power and authority.<sup>2</sup>

## Parental Control

Children must be educated in order to fulfil their duties. If children are not kept busy through fulfilling their tasks, they wander through the streets, spend their time at the disco, and sit in front of TVs or computers.

Parents should select programmes to follow on TV and limit the time their children spend watching them. It is necessary to explain that violence and aggression in real life cause death. The best way of dealing with the aforementioned phenomenon is to meet with other parents and select programmes to be watched by children. Too much time spent watching TV and playing computer games leads to loss of contact with reality. Current programmes and computer games support various kinds of aggression. Children lose their interest in school, friends and parents. Naturally, the influence of school and friends is one of the strongest pressures on youth; a teenager wants to be accepted by the majority of her or his peers.

The main principle is not only to forbid, but also to offer something better. We should celebrate various holidays with children, have a masquerade, pick and archive flowers, sing. All these activities strengthen the bonds of the family.

## Disharmony

Many factors can destroy family harmony. The family is based on joined effort and cooperation in the household. This is not a purely female or male task. Upbringing is enormously demanding especially with young children: parents must answer thousands of "why?" questions. Mutual cooperation of the two people is the crucial element in the family which helps to set the atmosphere at ease. Many fathers are stressed and nervous when they return home from work. They are exhausted and have no energy to solve family problems or to spend time with children. Despite this fact, children need fathers. It is only natural for a boy surrounded by women (teachers are mainly women) to look for and admire the "male" element. Extremely wild and restless boys need a strict father whom they would respect. The times in which a mother would devote her best years to children are gone for good. Today, both parents are adequately responsible for their children.

However, little children need stability in the family. Even a perfect au-pair cannot adequately substitute the love of a mother. A mother must stay with a child in the first years of her or his

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life and a father should support her in such activity. Many mothers cannot decide to stay with the child due to financial difficulties. But contemporary society needs women who would create and sustain the feeling of safety and peace. Family is a formation endangered by disintegration. Usually, one of the parents tries to win the child by the “policy of appeasements.” Both parents should hold the stated line and pursue the same things.



## Christian Families

Christian parents are responsible for the upbringing of their children and they are the first ones to become idols. Their responsibility to the Lord allows them to provide correct Biblical education for their children. Four aspects are needed in Christian education: 1. Parental faith—there are no spiritual victories if there is no faith; 2. Hope of Faith—the belief that what once was planted shall rise one day; 3. Love—originating in the Lord and having two dimensions: horizontal (to others) and vertical (to the Lord); 4. Parents are the example of Christianity—children will not find their way if parents do not guide them. Such upbringing is of codex nature and children will not accept it. Dobson says: a “Child carefully listens to parents and verifies the amount and strength of their beliefs; any hesitation or ethical chaos of parents is immediately multiplied in the child.”<sup>3</sup>

Christian parents should teach their children to worship in the family. Family worshipping includes a reading of the Bible and a brief presentation of its text. If any questions arise, these should be answered truly and patiently. It is necessary to say prayers after the reading. The prayer is important in everything that we do; the Lord wants to help us. Other characteristics to be taught are truthfulness, sincerity, patience and respect.

Christian education should take place in a positive family atmosphere. Therefore it is necessary to teach children about the Lord; to teach them to be careful in order not to destroy the balance between love and justice because imbalance in any direction brings deformation of truth and might negatively influence the understanding of the Lord and of Christianity.

*The article was translated by  
Lucia Rakayova*

### **SUGGESTED READING**

Crabb, Larry. *Osobnost člověka*, Prague 1995  
Dobson, James. *Výchova dětí*, Brno 1992  
Jan Pavol II. *Veritas Splendor*, Trnava 1994

### **(ENDNOTES)**

1 Crabb, Larry. *Osobnost člověka*, Prague 1995 P.106  
2 Dobson, James. *Výchova dětí*, Brno 1992 P.66  
3 Dobson, James. *Výchova dětí*, Brno 1992 P.34

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