

Parental Despotism Produces Obedience & Teachability

In fact, it is interesting to note that the English word “despot” finds its origin in the Greek word *despotes* - A compound word which literally means “lord of the house.”

Liddell, Henry G. and Robert Scott. *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. “despotes”:

The master of the house; absolute ruler. Used for the Roman Emperors, the gods, and generally for master, lord, or owner.

Vine, W. E. *Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, s.v. “despotes”:

Absolute ownership and uncontrolled power.

Zondervan. *Analytical Greek Lexicon*, s.v. “despotes”:

Denotes the possession of supreme authority.

In the Scripture the word is used for a slave owner in:

1 Timothy 6:1 - Let all who are under the yoke as slaves regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine may not be spoken against.

1 Timothy 6:2 - And let those who have believers as their masters not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but let them serve them all the more, because those who benefit by their service are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these things.

Jesus Christ is referred to in the Epistles as despotes in 2 Timothy 2:21, 2 Peter 2:1, and Jude 4. The Lord uses the term to describe the head of a household in several parables in the Gospels. For example:

Luke 12:39 - Be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into.

So, whether, slave master, head of a household, or the Lord Himself, the word refers to absolute sovereign power over people or property. Thus, the father is the head of the household and he, along with the child's mother, possesses absolute authority and unlimited power over the child. They are to use their power and authority in the manner which God directs from the Scripture in order to program the child's conscience with principles of right action. The parents have a right therefore to expect their policies to be precisely obeyed.

For the first thirteen years the objective is to force the child to orient and adjust to every command, every request, and every policy without question or delay. By the time the child reaches adolescence he will be instantly obedient to his parents while treating them with unwavering respect. This intensive training has developed an inner command post in the soul which results in a lifestyle of self-discipline.

Thirteen years of being constantly pricked by parental goads results in the child's self-suppression of his sinful nature. If this is the case, then the time of warfare, conflict, tension, and revolt is a thing of the past.

In adolescence, the child willingly complies with parental mandates rather than requiring forced compliance typical of early childhood. In early childhood, the youngster is expected to obey without question and to execute without hesitation. Beginning in adolescence he will continue this attitude but he is then capable of learning why the policies are important and how compliance with them is to his advantage.

Childhood obedience is imperative if the child is to successfully taught in adolescence. It is impossible to realize success if you reverse this procedure. To teach without control results in a child who is unteachable.

It is useless to reason with a small child. Therefore, it is not even to be attempted. Parents who try to reason with a child between 0 and 13 while being permissive toward his disobedience will have lost control by the time he is 13. The problem is extenuated when in adolescence there is an attempt to increase control but without instruction.

The teaching reveals the reasoning, the logic and the rationales behind the policy. By adolescence, the child deserves to know why he must obey. If he is not so taught, he will reject parental authority and submit to likable surrogates. Therefore, the policy is to insist on unquestioned obedience at an early age with the objective of gaining willing compliance by adolescence.