PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH OF RAISING GODLY CHILDREN TO FACE PRESENT CHALLENGES IN THE 21ST CENTURY: THE CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

UJATA SHAIBU AMOS PH.D
DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDY, SCHOOL OF SECONDARY EDUCATION ART AND SOCIAL SCIENCE, FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, ZARIA | ujataamos238@gmail.com, 08039656143

UJATA LADI UKA, MRS
DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES, SCHOOL OF SECONDARY EDUCATION ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE, FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, ZARIA | ujataladi9@gmail.com, 08133788127

ABSTRACT

The philosophical approach of raising godly children to face present challenges can be seen through the eyes of moral development, character education, and the cultivation of a strong spiritual foundation such that when they grow there will not easily depart or stray away from it.. It involves providing them with the necessary tools and guidance to navigate the complexities of the world while staying true to their moral beliefs and values even among their maters anywhere in the world. One key aspect of this approach is fostering the sense of moral reasoning and critical thinking in them. Encouraging open discussions on ethical and moral values which will help children develop their own moral concepts that informs decision making based on their understanding of right and wrong. This will include teaching them to consider the consequences of their future dreams in life, their actions, empathize with others, and make ethical choices even in difficult circumstances. In which case character education plays a vital role in raising the godly children. Thus instilling virtues such as honesty, integrity, compassion, humility, and resilience. Parents can also do this by modeling these same virtues themselves and reinforcing them through consistent reinforcement through positive discipline and praises for virtuous behaviors. In cultivating strong characters which children are better equipped to navigate the challenges they may face and demonstrate godly traits in their interactions with others. A philosophical approach to raising godly children thus emphasize the importance of spiritual development. This involves fostering a deep connection with a higher power or divine principles. In this case parents can provide religious education, engage in spiritual practices, and create an enabling environment that encourages children to explore and develop their own beliefs. Moreover, it's essential to recognize that present challenges are ever-evolving. Therefore, a philosophical

approach requires adaptability and openness to ongoing discussions and exploration. It encourages children to question, seek knowledge, and engage with diverse perspectives that fosters intellectual growth and equips them with the necessary tools to face the complex challenges of the modern world. In summary, the philosophical approach to raising godly children to face present challenges in this present age is mostly based on parent's efforts to help their children navigate the uncertainties of the world while staying true to their godly values and principles.

Introduction

Raising godly children to face present challenges in the 21st Century according to Dalziel, (2015) requires cultivating values, shaping their characters, and providing guidance that empowers children to navigate the complexities of the modern world while staying true to their faith. In the world of today. We have to explore key aspects of approach and provide practical insights for parents to get involve in day to day practical and truthful life as modules to their children. We live in the world that is under the influence of the "god of this age" 2nd Corth. 4:4), This is because the prince of the power of the world, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience are raging and spending extra time to govern their lives (Ephesians 2:2) The entertainment media are saturated with the perverted mindset of Satan's way of life. This world educational system is steeped in to satanic theory of evaluation, as well as a continual erosion of any sense of morality or value. Homes are going through divorcement, death of spouses and other socio-economic problems, hence breeding children with the spirit of nonchalant and carefree attitudes with ordinary church goers and not genuine Christians that could receive batons from the outgoings. Today violence and sexual themes flood the media as never before and peer-pressure, resulting in a dull life of suffering and self-denials. Dalziel, (2015). The Church and the Society have drifted and are still drifting from their original revered lay dawn traditions of our value system which calls for reorientation. Hence breeding children with the spirit of nonchalant and carefree attitudes with ordinary church goers and not genuine Christians that could receive batons from the outgoings. Today violence and sexual themes flood the media as never before and peer-pressure, resulting in a dull life of suffering and self-denials. Church and the society have to embark upon the reorientation of our value system through philosophical approach and Biblical principles, functional education and practical exemplary lives.

Theory

One theoretical perspective that can inform the approach to raising godly children is virtue ethics. Virtue ethics emphasizes the development of moral virtues and character traits that contribute to leading a virtuous and godly life. In the context of raising godly children, this perspective focuses on nurturing virtues that align with religious values and teachings.

Hale, (2018). highlights that virtue ethics is very important to modeling virtuous behaviors among children as parents or guardians live exemplary lives for their children.to emulate. Children learn by observing and imitating those around them, particularly their primary caregivers. Therefore, it is crucial for parents to imbibe the qualities and values they wish to instill in their children. For instance, demonstrating kindness, compassion, honesty, patience, and forgiveness can help children cultivate these virtues in their own lives.

Another theoretical approach that can be useful is moral development theory, particularly the work of Lawrence Kohlberg. Kohlberg proposed stages of moral development, where individuals' progress from a pre-conventional level focused on self-interest, to a conventional level characterized by conformity to societal norms and rules, and finally to a post-conventional level that emphasizes ethical principles and universal values.

Applying this theory to raising godly children involves guiding them to move beyond merely following rules out of fear or social pressure. Parents are to encourage critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and reflection on religious teachings to help children develop a deeper understanding of why certain values and moral principles are important. This empowers children to make ethically sound choices based on their own convictions and a genuine commitment to their faith.

Integrating teachings from religion and philosophy can provide a comprehensive framework for raising godly children. Religious texts often offer guidance on ethical behavior, virtues, and the purpose of life. Exploring philosophical ideas and concepts alongside religious teachings can stimulate critical thinking, foster intellectual curiosity, and encourage children to formulate their own beliefs and value systems. This combination allows children to engage with their faith in a meaningful and intellectually satisfying way, equipping them to face challenges with conviction and resilience.

It is important to note that while theoretical perspectives offer valuable insights, every child is unique, and parenting approaches must be tailored to individual needs, capacities, and belief systems. Flexibility, open communication, and ongoing dialogue with children are essential in the journey of raising godly children amidst present challenges.

Finding Recommendations

This research work is philosophical in nature and philosophical approach to every step was followed to some extent to ascertain the philosophical standard of a research work. Therefore, a philosophical approach to raising godly children to face present challenges involve integrating deep spiritual principles and practical life skills in their upbringing. Here are some recommendations for achieving this:

Moral and Ethical Foundation: To teach children the importance of values, ethics, and moral principles rooted in religious teachings. Help them understand concepts like honesty, compassion, empathy, and respect for all beings.

Encourage Critical Thinking: To teach children to question, analyze, and evaluate information from various sources. Encourage open discussions and provide them with tools to think critically about the challenges they face, helping them develop their own beliefs and values within the framework of their faith.

Scripture Study and Reflection: To encourage children to engage in regular scripture study and reflection to deepen their understanding of religious teachings. Help them see how these teachings relate to their daily lives and current challenges, guiding them in applying spiritual wisdom to practical situations.

Role Models: Introduce children to positive role models who exemplify godly qualities. This can include community and religious leaders, historical figures, or even family members who embody the values that could be inculcated and instilled in the children. Discuss their lives and actions, and highlight the lessons that can be learned from them Levine, (2016).

Prayer and Meditation: Teach children the importance of prayer and meditation as a means of seeking guidance, finding solace, and fostering a deeper connection with their faith. Encourage them to develop their own personal relationship with their higher power and provide them with opportunities for spiritual reflection.

Service and Philanthropy: Instill a sense of responsibility for others by engaging children in acts of service and philanthropy. Encourage them to identify and address the needs of their community, volunteering their time, talents, and resources to make a positive difference. This cultivates empathy, compassion, and a sense of purpose rooted in their faith.

Emotional Intelligence and Resilience: Equip children with emotional intelligence skills, teaching them how to manage their emotions, develop healthy relationships, and navigate challenges with resilience. Help them understand that setbacks and trials are opportunities for growth and encourage them to seek strength and guidance from their faith during difficult times.

Peer Group Pressure

Children today desire to socialize, in the attempt to do so, some fall prey into the hands of others that are very promiscuous, deadly (in a cult), cunny (that could lure them into immorality, yahoo, occult, banditry, kidnapping,

absenteeism from school, disobedient to the school authority, alcoholism, take up greedy lifestyles, promiscuity, stealing from other children in school, becoming a bully, unruly, ostentatious life style, lusciousness, to mention but few). Some of the children that have identify crisis are likely to become gullible in the bid to want to belong: they are caught in the web of peer group influence.

Challenge from School Mentors/ Teachers/ Guardians

According to Adeshina, (2020, Children have a very likable disposition towards their teachers that they could readily defend. They never see their teacher as fallible. They could idolize them. Some of them that are not Christians, may have ideals opposed to Christianity and Christian values this may pose a challenge to Christian children. Some of such teachers could be: Sex pervert (sodomy, lesbians, fornicators, adulterers etc.). They could mount pressure on such children and they are likely to succumb to this. Some could be of other religion, or in a sect/cult, occult, or an atheist and may want to convert them all to be in the good books of the so called mentor at school.

Environmental influence.

The location where you reside may make or mar a child's upbringing.

Where they spend holidays (with nieces, nephews, uncles, grand-parents and other relations that have no Christian virtues); Homes you associate with/ in relationship with; friends of the family that are not God fearing and unchristian immediate neighbors that at the borderline of your home could contribute negatively or positively to the building of the personality of a child. A maladjusted child will find it difficult to cope with life challenges.

Style of Parenting Authoritarian/permissive home

In authoritarian home misconducts brings consistent punishment, the demand for maturity is high, however children whose parents are authoritarians are likely to be obedient but not happy. Contrariwise, in the permissive home the parents often make a few demands on their children, hiding any impatience they feel. Discipline is lax. Such children are likely to be less happy and lack of control.

Gottlieb, B. P. (2008). Opines that Christian children must be taught God's word; they must be mentored in ways to apply the word to their lives. They must be inspired to live lives more like Christ, remembering Jesus is our model (Lk 2:48-52). Training children in what it means to be excellent will equip and inspire them to be excellent leaders in the future. Children must be taught how to be doers of the word of the God (James 1:21-26) not just how to come and sit and audit the bible classes and training sessions. They must be taught how to set and reach meaningful spiritual goals. The scripture has it that we train up a child in the way that he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it. (Prov.22:6). Raising Godly children is a ministry on its own that God will not want any parent to fail. It could be very tasking; it requires God's grace and wisdom. Children vary in their disposition from age to age. The children from age's five to twelve, thirteen to seventeen cannot be treated in the same as the one from eighteen to twenty-five.

Parents are enjoined to bring up their children in God's image, it must become the guiding light and central theme for everything done in the family. Create a culture of God within the home. Consciously seek to ensure that each child has a personal encounter with God. Salvation of parents is not transferable. We must seek to rededicate our lives in turning the hearts of spiritual father. This is the ultimate goal and purpose of parenting to have children in "God's image". (Gen 1: 26; Eph. 4: 14- 15; Rom 8:29; Rom 8:14, Rev 5:10). According to Stoner, (2009), to ensure these fundamental realities in children, we must lay foundation in the children's young impressionable years, so they will always desire to fully seek God as their father. The goal of raising godly children to face whatever challenge in life is to help them want to walk in the footsteps of parents who are living God's way of life, are who are walking in the footstep of Jesus. As parents, we want to develop our children's desire to follow God, not just emphasize our desire for them to follow God. (Note: you can't give what you don't have).

Parents should consciously supervise what the children watch or listen to on the TV, computers, internet, connected tablets, smartphones and other media. We must check mate on the dangerous strangers and harmful

contents that are there in. The children should be taught "cause and effect; that if they listen to or watch what the bible say to abstain from, it has a future damaging effect on their personality. Helping them to see how consistent lust can be influenced by visual immorality. Children must be taught that, God's law regarding sexuality and good behavior is a blessing that will enhance their lives and marriages the years ahead of them; and also guarantee eternal life. (1 Thessalonians 5:22. Math 5:28; Deut. 6: 6-7; Deut. 28:1-13; Math 16:27).

Parents should trust God to apply correct parenting life style in directing the affairs of the home. It has to be by blending of authoritarianism and permissive method. When the proper balance is employed and applied, God's summary of obedience and self-discipline can be realized (Ephesians6: 1-4).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the philosophical approach of raising godly children to face present challenges is a multi-faceted that involves integrating philosophical, moral, and spiritual principles into parenting practices. This approach recognizes the need to equip children with a strong sense of values, character development, critical thinking skills, and a deep understanding of their spiritual heritage. According to Levine, (2016), to embark upon child critical and philosophical thinking, parents can consider the following strategies:

1. Establish a foundation of values: Clearly defining and communicating a set of values that align with one's religious beliefs and moral principles provides a solid foundation for raising godly children. These values can include kindness, compassion, integrity, humility, honesty, and respect for others.

2. Encourage critical thinking: Nurturing critical thinking skills allows children to navigate complex challenges in a thoughtful and discerning manner. Encourage open-mindedness, curiosity, and the ability to ask questions, as it helps children develop their own understanding of faith and morality.

3. Model godly behavior: Parents play a crucial role in shaping their children's worldview. Demonstrating godly behavior through actions, such as being loving, forgiving, and compassionate, serves as a powerful example for children to emulate.

4. Provide adequate religious education: Teaching children about their religious heritage and beliefs helps them develop a strong spiritual foundation. Engage them in age-appropriate discussions, share stories and teachings from religious texts, and involve them in religious practices, rituals, and community activities.

5. Foster a supportive community: Surrounding children with a supportive community of like-minded individuals can reinforce the values and principles parents are striving to instill in them. Engage in religious ceremonies, activities, and gatherings that bring them into contact with positive role models and mentors.

The philosophical approach to raising godly children is grounded in a deep understanding of the values and principles that guide a person's spiritual and moral development. It involves nurturing the foundation of faith, instilling moral character, and preparing children to navigate the challenges of the present time.

McClellan, (2015). maintains that it is essential to cultivate a strong spiritual foundation for children. This involves introducing them to religious teachings, scriptures, and rituals that resonate with your beliefs. Encourage them to explore and understand their faith, fostering a personal relationship with God. By instilling a sense of spirituality, children develop a framework to seek higher values, find purpose, and make choices guided by divine teachings.

Alongside spirituality, the development of moral character is crucial. Teach children moral virtues such as kindness, empathy, honesty, integrity, and humility. Help them understand the consequences of their actions and encourage them to make choices that align with ethical principles. By emphasizing the importance of moral character, children learn to embrace ethical values, and their behavior becomes a reflection of their godly upbringing.

Allender (2005), Opines that lt is vital to equip children with knowledge and critical thinking skills necessary to face the present challenges with wisdom and discernment. Introduce them to various philosophical and ethical perspectives, engaging in meaningful

discussions that encourage independent thinking. By fostering intellectual curiosity, children gain the ability to analyze complex issues, identify moral dilemmas, and make informed decisions that align with their faith.

Furthermore, it is essential to provide children with a safe and supportive environment. Create opportunities for open communication, where they feel comfortable expressing their thoughts, doubts, and questions regarding their faith and the challenges they encounter. Encourage healthy skepticism and guide them in finding answers through dialogue, reflection, and further study. By fostering an atmosphere of trust and understanding, children feel empowered to develop their own faith and navigate the complexities of the world with confidence.

As parents or caregivers, it is crucial to lead by example. Demonstrate godly virtues in your own actions, both in private and public settings. Be consistent in displaying love, respect, forgiveness, and compassion towards others. By witnessing these qualities firsthand, children learn the significance of integrating faith into every aspect of their lives.

Finally, be mindful that raising godly children in the face of present challenges requires adaptability and flexibility. The world is constantly evolving, bringing forth new issues and dilemmas. Stay informed about contemporary challenges, and actively engage with your children to understand their perspectives and concerns. This enables you to provide relevant guidance and support, helping them navigate the complexities of the modern era while staying true to their faith.

Overall, the philosophical approach to raising godly children entails nurturing their spiritual foundation, developing moral character, fostering critical thinking skills, providing a safe environment for open communication, leading by example, and adapting to the challenges of the present time. By following these principles, parents can empower their children to grow into individuals who confidently embrace their faith while positively impacting the world around them.

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