

**AGAPE CHRISTIAN EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION**

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EXHORTATION FOR THE PRE/ADOLECCENT GROUP IN PREPARATION FOR LIFE SKILLS TRAINING

INTRODUCTION

In Bible times, there was no formal training. Nevertheless there were two different types of training

It evolved from memorization of the Bible when more formal educational systems did not exist

Reading and writing skills were therefore possessed by only a few

But this gradually changed over to time.

One thing that was a consistent part of training children was life-skills. This was because they believed, and rightly too, that it was dangerous for any member of the family/community not to have a life-skill. In fact wealth at the time included the number of children you had because the more you had, the more hands you will have to help you in your agrarian activities which was often practiced side by side with other skills.

While livelihoods are very diverse in our days, it is still dangerous not to have a skill, especially in the worseing economic environment we live in.

By life skill, we mean PRACTICAL, family or community-relevant occupation that younger people can learn informally and hands-on from older people who are already experts at it. This is something very similar to what we call apprenticeship today. Only life skill training is not at a vocational level. It is girded by the principle that the devil makes work for idle hands… and every member of the family that had reached a certain age had the responsibility of contributing in some way to improving himself personally and supporting the family and indeed, community life. No wonder apostle Paul so vehemently declared - He who does not work should not eat.

In our world today, we seem to focus on the academic above everything else, but from the experience of the most successful people in our world today, they build up an area of interest very early in life and while some may not eventually use it for a living, at least they could teach others and bless them thereby. And God loves a cheerful giver.

I speak from personal experience when I declare that a life skill can also be great fun. It titillates part of the brain you don’t use often. Young brains are very sharp and need a challenge, which is why it is the best time to start learning life skills. And it gives great pleasure when you create something. Scientific proof??? It’s not all about making money. But the greatest joy in having a life skill is when your choice is based on HELPING OTHERS. It never fails. Most of the greatest inventors in history saw a need, a problem which they were challenged to resolve or make easier on people. And that is why they succeed. God indeed loves a cheerful giver.

So lets look at the example of some young people in the bible to further show that a Christian child needs a life-skill.

David - youngest. At about 12??, already in charge of the family flock, which allowed his older brothers to join the army to defend the people of God. But who became the greatest soldier eventually? And where do you suppose he learnt to write such lovely poems and songs, while helping out with what seemed to be the least important job in the family!!!

And this was not limited to boys only. Remember Rachel, Rebekah, Moses’ wife???? etc Good things come to you when you are busy helping out in home or community.

How about the example of Miriam, Moses’ brother? At such an early age, she knew her mother’s plan to save her brother, and she closely monitored how she was doing it and took initiative to help her mum save her brother. Something tells me she must have been helping her mum to take care of Moses and grew to love him very much. And this was why when the opportunity came to take the initiative necessary to ensure he was properly brought up in he knowledge of the God of Israel she boldly and courageously seized the opportunity. And Moses ended up being trained by his real mother who was also paid for it!!!! Smart girl!!! God used her powerfully because that way, God made Moses aware of his real heritage, and prepared him as the vehicle to save His people later on. Starting early brings blessings to you and others whether directly or indirectly.

You remember Bezaleel and Aholiab??? in Exodus??? 30???? and how their God-given skills singled them out for use in building God’s Tabernacle at Mount Sinai? They grew up as slaves, and were greatly oppressed. Nevertheless, they learnt and performed the skills for unbelievers without murmuring. And God blessed their effort by turning their knowledge into a great channel of blessing for His People. God saw them while they were suffering. God noted that they were using the gift He gave them. And so God could trust them when they grew up, to do great things for His glory. And we still remeber them today form Bible accounts. It shows Gos has a record of how we use our talents and skills in heaven.

Parable of the talents?

And the lost coin - accountability?

And how about the first Deacons in the First Church. The seven Deacons were not recognised for their preaching or for their certificates. Rather they were recognised for their honesty, good conduct, etc. And because of this, they were selected to ‘wait on tables… waiters, waitresses, domestic work to help the widows and stop conflicts and complaints in the church. See how God used them powerfully. And from that small service, see how God took them to greater heights? Phillip by a wonderful leading of the Holy Spirit, witnessed to a very important man, who just also happened to be the first African Christian living in Africa.

And Stephen, While it may be difficult to think of being persecuted and killed like Stephen, did he not see the Glory of Christ before he died, and even repeat His same word.. Father forgive them? And we are still reading about him over two thousand years later while he is enjoying the beauty and glory of heaven… and many are called after him today. Who is greater now? Stephen or those who killed hiM Are many young people not being killed by terrorists today in our country? Boys and girls of different ages and backgrounds.

And his death even led to the conversion of the great Apostle Paul who never forgot the incident and mentioned it in ?????

And finally shall we not mention our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself who is God and came to earth as an ordinary man because of His love for us? At 12 years old he was already discussing deep things in the Bible with the great Jewish teachers of His day… And we know he was a ‘carpenter’. By the way, some scholars explain that the word used for ‘carpenter’ is not as we understand it today. In fact the true meaning of the word in Greek, *tecton*, is more like a builder, or a handy man with or as a building contractor, working to build houses and domestic utensils. A very sweaty and hard job to learn and practice. And as you can see, Jesus used the experience of His skills and knowledge of His community’s needs to simplify the word of God so they can understand it better… my yoke is light and….??? I will build My Church… Alleluia!! Why do I get the feeling that He must have a had a great reputation as a builder? Yes first he built physical buildings. He earned a living from a skill he no doubt stated learning early in life from His earthly father=guardian who was also a ‘carpenter’ and when He grew up, he had earned and saved enough to leave the job to concentrate on the Spiritual Building, The Church.

Or did you see anywhere our Lord Jesus Christ was asking for offerings and donations from people to feed Himself and His 12 Disciples? Remember when he paid the Temple Tax for Himself and the disciples?????? Miracle from the mouth of a fish!!! And when He approved the national tax which He was no doubt paying… Give unto Caesar what is Caesar?????

If God could come in the flesh and learn under and ordinary man to make a living, how about you?

You have been attending Church since you were a little child, are you born again? And if not, why not? Now you have another chance to give tp God what is God[s… another chance to give your life to Christ. And if you truly have already done so, your time has come to take another important step of faith in process of distinguishing yourself to the glory of God.

We are not offering you and opportunity for a life-time career so you can make lots of money and become a great popular man or woman. No. We are offering you and opportunity to start the process of being useful to yourself and others. That is the first step. Remember, He who is faithful in little wil be faithful in much

May God give you humility, wisdom, love and grace to take the next step to accomplishing the great purpose He has for your life in Jesus’ mighty Name.