

Training by Association

#0587

Study given by W.D. Frazee—May 22, 1970

We would like to go home right now. How long will it be? Is there anything we can do about it? There is something we can do about it. That is to follow the directions that the Master has given us. If the energy has been devoted in recent years to thinking up new ideas, new plans, new methods of how to get the work done, we would have been in the kingdom before now. If that same energy had been given in reading these books God has given us and doing what He says, we would have been in the kingdom before now.

God is not waiting for some bright mind to think up something better than He gave us through inspiration. He is looking for some generation that will take Him at His word and do what He said. Will you be one? I trust so.

"The plan of the schools we shall establish in these closing years of the message is to be of an entirely different order from those we have instituted" *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, page 532.

This tells us that our schools will be different from those we have instituted. We are told what the pattern is:

"Our schools are to be more and more efficacious and self-reliant from a human standpoint, more like the schools of the prophets" *Ibid*.

My heart has been impressed in recent days to study into the basic principle of relationships in training that the schools of the prophets demonstrated.

There has been upheavals on many university campuses. While I was in New York City I chanced to be down in the Wall Street area, and the minister I was with found himself tied up in traffic due to some youth demonstration picketing Wall Street. As the sign of the times, the violence, unrest, revolution, and the spirit of rebellion is something interesting. As something for us to pattern after it is not interesting at all. And if we are infected with any of those ideas we shall need to be converted, or else we will never have a part in the latter rain and the loud cry.

I have experienced some of the blessing of the simple plan. I have no question in my heart but that it will play a large part in preparing the workers who will give the loud cry.

Every man needs to be either a son, a brother, or a father. Every woman needs to be either a daughter, a sister, or a mother. A given man may during the course of his lifetime may fill all three of those positions. A given woman may be

called upon to participate in those responsibilities. But in God's ideal plan they always come in that order. And the great lesson of the son is obedience from love. The great lesson of the brother is in helping those of similar age or experience to learn that lesson. The great responsibility of the father is to train in that lesson of loving obedience those committed in his charge.

This may be in the home. It may be in an institution. Such were the schools of the prophets. It may be in the church. It should be in all these.

Too many people are trying to lead when they have never learned to follow. To many people are trying to be fathers when they have never learned to be sons.

Very few people have served their time in the penitentiary and go home without learning anything out of it. Some of them are back again before long. Serving time in an institution may give you a release from prison or a degree, depending on which institution you have served time in. But it doesn't in any way guarantee that you have learned the lesson.

Does it take several hours from the time you stir the dough up until you get ready for the baking? The mere passing of the time doesn't produce the result. You have to put the bread in the oven. And it would make a difference if the oven was turned on.

I have referred to the schools of the prophets. The best examples in the New Testament are found in the way Jesus trained His disciples and in the way Paul trained the young people who were associated with him in giving the gospel.

"But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel" Philippians 2:22.

Timothy was tested and tried. He gave full proof of his ministry. He was a product that Paul was proud of. He was worth the training Paul had put into him. Paul wasn't Timothy's father, but Paul took him on as an apprentice. There are plenty of fathers who have begotten children and are not really fathers at all. Paul was a real father to Timothy. Timothy had a wonderful mother who knew the Lord, and her mother knew the Lord. But Timothy's father was a Greek. Timothy got most of his childhood training from his mother and grandmother. Paul took him on as an apprentice when he was a young man, and he gave him something more than the ordinary teacher gives in a classroom or the ordinary supervisor gives in an institution. He gave Timothy something more than the ordinary parent is giving his child in the ordinary home today. He gave Timothy himself.

Timothy was with Paul night and day seven days a week. That is what he wanted. He liked the arrangement. So did Paul. This is the pattern of the schools of the prophets. Training by association. Training apprentices.

Forty years ago I was talking with a young physician connected with a large medical institution on the west coast. I read him some statements about what the Lord had called for in physicians and ministers working together. I invited this young man to get an experience in soul winning.

Doctors may go through some classes, but when they want to learn surgery and become proficient they are associated with an experienced surgeon for a period of time. First they observe. Second they assist. Third they operate.

I told that doctor that this is the way to learn soul winning. I thank the Lord that He impressed that young man to resign his position in that great worldly medical institution and come into a medical missionary program and learn as an apprentice. He has been doing something for the Master ever since.

When I was a young man Elder Tindall tapped me on the shoulder and talked to me about these principles. He read to me and to my parents this statement:

"Many young men who have had the right kind of education at home are to be trained for service and encouraged to lift the standard of truth in new places by well-planned and faithful work. By associating with our ministers and experienced workers in city work, they will gain the best kind of training"
Testimonies for the Church, Volume 9, page 119.

Why is association the best plan? It is the plan the Lord has been using all down through time. It is the patriarchal plan. It is the son with the father. It is the school of the prophets plan. The students in the schools of the prophets were called sons of the prophets. Not all the teachers had visions and dreams as Elijah and Elisha had them, but they were all under the leadership of the prophetic gift. The fellow teachers who shared with Elijah and Elisha in that work accepted the guidance of the Spirit of prophecy.

If the students were the sons of the prophets, what does a son have? He has a father. Elisha himself recognized in Elijah his spiritual father. Not merely when he was a boy, but when his period of apprenticeship was over and Elijah was taken in the chariot of fire, Elisha's last words were, My father, my father. They had a wonderful fellowship. I don't think Elijah had to pull Elisha along. As you study the experience at the beginning, on more than one occasion Elijah gave Elisha every opportunity to leave him and go on his own.

There are a lot of people who think this would be something wonderful, but they do not understand what it costs. We are living in a generation that doesn't want to miss anything. To do what I am talking about, you will have to be willing to miss everything. Those men who climbed Mount Everest missed a lot of things while they were on that dangerous trip. Think of all the things those men who made it to the moon and back missed not only on the trip but in the years of preparation.

Someone says, "But they got to the moon."

Precisely. And God is going to finish His work when He gets some people who want to do His work more than anything else in this world, and are willing to accept heaven's simple principles about it.

What kind of preparatory experience do young men need? The right kind of education at home. Hardly any young people have had that. They have never learned to obey. Elisha obeyed Elijah. Timothy obeyed Paul.

Timothy was so obedient that Paul could count on him. When Paul sent Timothy down to Philippi, the place where Paul got beaten and put in prison, Timothy wanted to go. He loved Jesus. And as a loving son he was cooperating and obedient.

Someone says, You would destroy everyone's individuality.

Oh, no. A true father doesn't destroy the individuality of a son. He develops it. And all this rioting in the streets has nothing very individualistic about it. It is a mob. What constructive work is it developing? If you sprinkle some holy water on that and bring it into the church, it doesn't make it a bit better. God is looking for some young people who will long to get the kind of training that Elisha got with Elijah, that the sons of the prophets got in the schools of the prophets, that Timothy got with Paul, and the disciples got with Jesus Christ.

Timothy wasn't the only spiritual son Paul had.

"To Titus, mine own son after the common faith" Titus 1:4.

Don't you think Titus and Timothy had wonderful privileges? It cost them a great deal. Think what they could have been doing while they were sharing in the burdens and problems and persecutions and hard sweat with Paul. They had heard the call of God, and they answered.

God wants a man not only to be a son, but a brother. In most families there is more than one child. It has always been God's plan that as the children come along the older will help the younger. The whole purpose of this is to develop the spirit of love and caretaking. So it is in spiritual things and the work of God. On your way from being an apprentice to being a leader, you need to pass through a period in which you are helping your leader train younger people. Not necessarily younger in age, but younger in experience.

Someone says, "But they won't listen to me."

Your problem is to learn how to work with them so they will listen to you.

As many people see someone go out and make a success for God, the idea comes to them that they too must run and do it. I hope that you get what Elisha got before you go. I hope you get what Timothy got before you go. I hope you get what Titus got before you go. Learn obedience, love obedience, and love cooperation. You don't need to be afraid of slavery if the one you are working with is in touch with the Spirit of God. God wants to give you liberty. But He wants to give you liberty to do something than just running around like a dog chasing his tail. The dog is having a lot of freedom, but I don't think he is getting much done.

It is a wonderful thing to love God so much and love His work so much and love the leaders God has put you with so much, whether in the home, the school, or the church, that you long to cooperate. If I were you, I would find a situation like that, or else I would find and experience with God so my present situation would become like it. Why spend time in an oven when there is no fire in it, watching the clock to see when the bread will be ready. Why do it? Why not settle down to business like Timothy did with Paul and like Elisha did with Elijah.

You remember the story of Ruth. Her husband had died. Her father-in-law had died. Her brother-in-law had died. So her mother-in-law, Naomi was going back to the land of Israel, back to her ancestral home. These two girls, Ruth and Orpah of a foreign nation who had married these two Hebrew young men and had been left widows accompanied their mother-in-law. But the time came when Naomi said to them, You have been kind to me. It is time for you to go back now.

Orpah had fulfilled the customary kindnesses and courtesies and politeness. She had done her duty, and she turned and went home. But Ruth said:

"Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me" Ruth 1:16.

Her attitude was very similar to the attitude of Elisha with Elijah. There aren't very many young women today who have any kind of idea of this attitude toward some older woman. What is the motto today? Don't trust anyone over thirty. Is that attitude adopted supposed to finish the work? Not a bit. It will finish the people who get infected with it, but not for heaven.

I thank God that I know a few young people who want no part of that. I thank God that I know a few young people who want what Timothy got, and want what Ruth got, and know God's plan of getting it. And if I were you, regardless how old you are, I would say, Dear Lord, where am I in the procession? Am I a father? Has God given me the responsibility in the home, the church, the institution to train and educate and discipline in the way of loving obedience? Am I doing a good job of it? Or maybe I haven't learned my lessons in the preparatory time. Maybe I need to go back and become an apprentice. Maybe I need to learn the lessons and graduate with honors like Timothy did, and like Elisha did. And in the process maybe I need to learn as a brother to lay hold of people around me, similar to me in age or experience, and help them to master the lesson of loving obedience.

The prodigal son in the far country knew nothing about what we are studying tonight. But when he came to himself he said, I will arise and go to my father. He was willing at last to be told what to do. Do you want to be told what to do? Not many people do.

Jesus spent His whole life in this world on that principle. He never once consulted His inclinations or wishes. Having taken our humanity, He had the

temptations that you and I have to choose our own way. But He said, I do always those things that please My Father. It is a wonderful thing to love obedience. I want you to see an interesting expression concerning the life and experience of Jesus on this point:

"Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" Hebrews 5:8.

It doesn't mean that Jesus was ever disobedient. He was always obedient. The way to learn to be obedient is by being obedient. You never learn to be obedient by being disobedient.

Jesus learned obedience by the things He suffered. Is it a painful process? Sometimes. Is it worth it? People tell me that conventional education is raising its tuition cost all the while. The tuition in this course has always been high. The tuition in the school of the prophets is very high. That's why few people are interested in it. It can't be paid for with money. It takes all you have. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered."

Parents, teachers, or leaders in an institution, I challenge you in God's name tonight to be in your little circle what Elijah was in his circle, what Paul was in his circle, and what Naomi was in her circle. Will you do it? Remember, to train one Timothy or Elisha is worth a lifetime. But it sometimes takes a lifetime. Up and at it, dear fathers and mothers in Israel. And remember, whenever parents bring children into the world they accept the responsibility we are studying. Whenever teachers accept a job in a Christian school, they accept the responsibility we are studying. Whenever men accept the responsibility of being a church elder or deacon, a Sabbath School superintendent, or some other leadership in the church, if they know what they are doing they accept this kind of responsibility.

Someone says, "I didn't know that."

You had better face it and accept it or resign. Paul says:

"For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel" 1 Corinthians 4:15.

It takes more to be a father than to be an instructor. There are not many fathers. There are many people to fill a job, take a position, and instruct and tell people what to do. But not many fathers that can inspire loving response get cooperation, and teach obedience and love it. Not many.

Are you a son? Are you learning obedience with someone that God has put you with. It may not always be your father in the flesh.

"Wise is that young man and highly blest who feels it to be his duty, if he has parents, to look up to them, and if he has not, who regards his guardian, or those with whom he lives, as counselors, as comforters, and in some respects as his

rulers, and who allows the restraints of his home to abide upon him" *Testimonies for the Church*, Volume 2, page 308.

One of the leaders of the revolution movements said recently, "The first lesson young people have to learn is to be willing to kill their parents." Some of them are learning fast. It isn't all done with a gun or a sword. There are ways to break parents hearts. I put before you two things that will be increasingly represented in this world. One is the spirit of unrest, disobedience, rebellion, which is more and more going to take the world. On the other hand, God is going to develop a people in this world that fully represent the principles we have studied tonight. The contrast between the two is going to be just as decided as between the false sabbath and the true Sabbath.

Which road are you going? Don't think you can mix up some ham and soybeans and it would be a fine combination? Not a bit of it. Thank God, we want to be delivered from Babylon completely. Are you with me? We want to get clear out of Egypt. By God's grace, we want to go into the promised land.

We will have to meet the Master here first if we will meet Him in heaven.

Heavenly Father, rightly interpret to our heart the things we have studied tonight. Forbid that the Devil should come between the message of God and our heart's understanding. Oh, may scales fall from our eyes, and may we rejoice as we see the simple plans of the schools of the prophets. May we share in getting ready an army of young people rightly trained that the message may be quickly carried to the ends of the earth. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

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