

Teach  
Your  
Children



# Teach Your Children

**By Robert G. Theophilus**

**THIS BOOKLET IS NOT TO BE SOLD. The information provided is for the benefit of former members of the congregations of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), and of current and prospective members of God's Church.**

*In the days of the Worldwide Church of God, the assembled faithful were periodically reminded of their responsibility to teach their children. According to the Bible, it is the responsibility of parents to train their children. The teaching responsibilities of the parents were thought to include the requirement to introduce them to the religious beliefs of the parents with the hope that in doing so, they would grow up to become members of God's Church. But, is it possible to bring about the conversion of our children by giving them religious training?*



## *Preamble*

**Please Note:** All comments in brackets [ ] or in parentheses ( ) as well as highlighted text (bolded and/or in blue) are from the author of this study. Bible quotations are in maroon.

I think it is essential to clarify the question of the “Holy Spirit” before we begin this study. If we say that who or what is the “Holy Spirit” is the question that needs to be answered, we are starting from the assumption that there exists such a being as the Holy Spirit and that it is a separate and distinct being from God and the Word. The question which should be asked is who are the beings the Bible tell us are holy, whose composition is spirit and who have existed eternally? Either the Bible plainly tells us who are the separate and distinct beings that existed from all eternity who created all things (spirit beings and the material universe) or we have no way of getting an answer to our question.

### **The Holy Spirits of the God Family**

The Bible tells us in Gen 1:1 that:

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

The Hebrew word translated “God” is “Eloheem” which is the plural form of “Eloah which means “God”. The word “Eloheem” refers to “gods.” It is a uniplural noun like family, group, team, etc. In the beginning, there was therefore more than one God being in existence but how many were there?

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In the beginning when God created the heaven and the earth there was God and there was another being with God who was also God, the Word. How can these two beings both be God; isn't that impossible?

The word God indicates the kind of existence of these 2 beings: their nature is to be God in the same way that all human beings have the same human nature. However, having the same nature does not mean that all human beings constitute a single being; indeed, they are all separate and distinct beings with their own personalities. God and the Word have in common the same nature or, level and type of existence, but they are separate and distinct beings just like all human beings who have the same human nature are separate and distinct beings.

### **God the Father**

We read in the Bible that God became a father when the Word became flesh (Phi 2:5-8) by being born of woman after having been conceived in the virgin Mary by the holy spirit being called God (Luke 1:35). God from that point on became God the Father and the Word, who was born as the flesh-and-blood Jesus of Nazareth became God's Son or the Son of God. He was both fully God (his father was God and fully human (his mother was the virgin Mary).

Jesus was God the Father's only begotten son at the time when He was conceived in Mary's womb but He was not to be the only one begotten of the Father. God the Father is the holy spirit being in the Godhead that calls men to salvation.

**Joh 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.**

**Joh 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.**

**Joh 18:9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou [God the Father] gavest me have I lost none.**

**1Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**

### God the Word and Spokesman

The Bible term for being called is to be spiritually begotten by God the Father (1Pe 1:3). When we are begotten, we become a spiritual embryo that can be born again as a glorified spirit being with eternal life. Those begotten of the holy spirit God the Father who follow their calling are then able to come to the holy spirit being called the Word and Spokesman (John 6:44; 65; 18:9) who then teaches them. The glorified Jesus-Christ as God the Father's Word and Spokesman is the holy spirit being that works in the minds of God the Father's called and chosen ones.

**Joh 7:39** (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Jesus had to first be glorified for it to be possible for Christians to have access to the holy spirit called the Word and Spokesman because the glorified Christ is the holy spirit being who works in the minds of God's saints (John 14:17) in the same way that Satan is the evil spirit that works in the minds of the children of disobedience (Eph2:2).

**Joh 14:17** Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he [Christ] dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. [On the day of Pentecost, it would be in them and in all true Christians.]

**Eph 2:2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, [Satan] the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

The holy spirit God the Father calls men and those who follow their calling are then taught by the holy spirit called the Word and God the Father's Spokesman.

**Joh 14:26** But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

### The Holy Ghost

The expression “Holy Ghost” used in the Bible is in error as there are no ghosts in the Godhead but rather 2 beings that are holy (John 17:11; Isa 6:3) and spirit (John 4:24).

**Joh 17:11** And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

**Isa 6:3** And one cried unto another, and said, **Holy, holy, holy**, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

**Joh 4:24** **God is a Spirit:** and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

These 2 God beings who are holy and spirit are the holy spirit beings of the God family who existed in the beginning at the creation of all things.

**Joh 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

**Joh 1:2** The same was in the beginning with God.

**Joh 1:3** All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

And, the Word who was with God is before all things i.e., *nothing* existed before He created them whether made of spirit or matter.

**Col 1:15 [Christ]** Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature:

**Col 1:16** For by him [the Word who became Jesus-Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

**Col 1:17** And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

In the beginning before anything either physical or spiritual was created, there was God and the Word who existed before all things and no other being is mentioned as having existed with them. There is no bib-

lical evidence that there ever existed a third, separate and distinct personage in the Godhead called the “Holy Spirit” who dwelt in eternity with God and the Word.

### **God is a Family**

Throughout the Bible we can find many verses which clearly indicates the existence of family relations between God and the Word and God’s called, chosen and faithful.

**Mat 11:27** All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

**Mat 12:50** For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

**Joh 20:17** Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

God is clearly a family in which many can be ultimately born again by a resurrection from the dead to eternal, glorified spirit life in God’s Kingdom.

**Rom 8:29** For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he [God’s Son] might be the firstborn among many brethren.

**Col 1:18** And he [the glorified Christ] is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Christ was the first to be born again by a resurrection from the dead to be followed by many brethren.

### **Bible Writing Convention**

The practice in the Bible has been to simply use the expression “the Holy Spirit” without indicating which God personage in the Godhead the expression represents. Over time, because of this practice, just about everybody has come to believe that the Holy Spirit is a separate and distinct God being in the Godhead but, there is no single verse or group of verses in the Bible that prove the existence of such a third being in the Godhead. The words “holy” and “spirit” are adjectives that describe the nature of

God the Father and of God the Word i.e., they are holy beings made of spirit.

Whenever we encounter the expressions the “Holy Spirit” or simply the “Holy Spirit” in the Bible we must look at the context to determine of which holy spirit being of the Godhead the Bible is talking about: the holy spirit, God the Father or the holy spirit, the Word and Spokesman.

The Word is the holy spirit being in the Godhead who carries out the instructions and wishes of the holy spirit, God. He is the faithful son who seeks to do his father’s will in all things. He is the member of the God family that did the work of creating the heaven and the earth, who ruled over ancient Israel through Moses and his human successors, He is the one who became a man who suffered and died to be God the Father’s perfect sacrifice for sin and make the salvation of mankind possible, etc. and He came to reveal the Father to those who follow the Father’s calling.

### **Making Things Clearer**

In this study, when referring to God’s spirit who, depending on the circumstances can be the holy spirit personage called God the Father or the holy spirit personage called God the Word and Spokesman, I will not capitalize either of the adjectives “holy” and “spirit”. This is in order to not perpetuate the false impression in the minds of readers that there is a 3rd being in the Godhead called the “Holy Spirit.” Instead, I will refer to either of the holy spirits in the God family as being God’s spirit without capitalizing the word “spirit” to make it plain that we are not referring to a third God being in the God family called the “Holy Spirit” but to one of the 2 God beings in the Godhead.

God’s family is presently made up of 2 holy spirit beings to which are to be added thousands and possibly millions of other holy spirit beings when God’s plan of salvation for mankind has reached its end. The saints that endure in the faith until the end of their natural human life, will be resurrected as individual holy spirit beings in God’s Kingdom when it is established.

There are two studies which you can read regarding what is the “Holy Spirit” and decide for yourself in light of the Bible-based evidence offered if such a being exists in the Godhead. These studies are: [What is the Holy Spirit? Cliff Notes Version](#) and [Who or What is the Holy Spirit?](#)





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**T**he Worldwide Church of God (WCG) under the leadership of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA) taught that God requires parents to teach their children.

Many were those who thought that teaching religious beliefs to their children would lead to them becoming converted. Most every parent wanted their children to become truly converted Christians. They would then be protected from the Great Tribulation. Just about everybody thought that this event was soon to occur. No one wanted to be found unworthy to be taken to the Place of Safety or for their family members to be left behind.

Let's examine what the Bible teaches regarding the raising of children. And, let's attempt to answer the question whether teaching children religious beliefs results in their becoming converted adults.

### **Ye Shall Teach Them**

God through Moses, commanded ancient Israel to teach their children.

Deu 11:19 And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

As per Deu 11:19, parents teaching their children is a 24-hour-a-day task.

What were the parents to teach their children?

From Deu 11:1 to Deu 11:17, God is listing what He has done for Israel, what He expects of them and what they have to do to prosper in the Promised Land. The parents were to teach their children the historical events regarding the freeing of Israel from its captivity under the Egyptians; the law, statutes and judgments God gave Israel; and the necessity for them to obey God to prosper in the Promised Land.

The Old Testament is physical and material as Israel didn't have the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman dwelling in them and enabling them to understand God level spiritual truth. The knowledge they were told to impart to their children was not spiritual truth that can only be known by revelation from God.

This is a very important distinction to keep in mind as it will allow us to understand the limits of what can be taught by truly converted parents to their children.

### **Training Children**

Why are parents to train their children, what is it that they can be taught and why?

Pro 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Young children need to learn how to live peacefully and productively with a wide variety of human beings in social groups governed by laws. Respect for the authority of the parents is the first lesson that needs to be learned as well as respect for other legitimate and necessary authority figures and rules governing social group member interactions. Respecting authority is something that will become part of the character of the child if taught at the appropriate time.

This is not something that can be done at any age; there is a time and place or occasion for everything.

Ecc 3:1 To every thing there is a season [an occasion], and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

Pro 19:18 Chasten [the Hebrew words indicates that

chastening can be done with words or blow] thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

Pro 19:18 tells us that there is a time when chastening or correction will be effective i.e., “while there is hope” which also means, there is a time when chastening will not be effective. It has been traditionally understood that training that will be the most influential in the life of a person and that will last their whole lifetime is training received as a child.

Once that window of opportunity closes as children grow older, the efforts of parents to transmit moral and social values to their children will not meet with any great success.

The Bible tells us something about the kind of discipline to be used in training children and the result of inadequate discipline.

Pro 23:13 Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.

Pro 23:14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.

Pro 22:15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

Pro 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.

Carefully controlled and applied physical correction at a very young age will usually establish the need for the child to obey the parents. Physical correction progressively loses its formative power as the years go by and needs to be replaced by non-physical forms of chastening.

The critical formative years are the first 5 years. If the necessary obedience training was not then done, it will be a never ending battle of wills between the parents and their children. The time when there could have occurred respect for authority, an effective acquisition of moral values and societal standards will be past. The result will be an unruly child hostile to the authority of his parents and other authority figures in society. This attitude will adversely affect their ability to function in society.

Timing is the most important consideration with the next one being ensuring discipline is age-adapted so as to be effective.

Additionally, there is a fine line that needs to be walked to ensure discipline is not taken so far that it becomes something that will be strongly resented by the children and cause them to become enraged. This is the message of Eph 6:4.

Eph 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath:[enrage them] but bring them up in the nurture [education and training] and admonition [mild rebuke or warning] of the Lord.

The education and training of children needs to include mild warnings as opposed to unfailingly being punished once the child has learned to respect the authority of the parents. The goal of discipline is to provide a framework of values and standards that will become part of the child's character. The ultimate long term goal is for the child to learn self control so as to have a happy life.

But is it possible to teach spiritual knowledge to children?

### **Spiritual Knowledge**

The Scriptures we have just been reviewing have left many with the impression that if we teach our children spiritual knowledge then when they become adults, this knowledge will remain with them. The thinking was that this would facilitate their coming to conversion. This way of thinking was based on what is said in Pro 22:6.

Pro 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, **he will not depart from it.**

The ministry taught that the children of truly converted Christians are not cut off from God as are the children of the non-converted. They are not cut off but they are also not called, they said. The following Scripture was used in support of this belief.

1Co 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

The principle seems to be that the unbelieving and unconverted spouse is sanctified by the believing spouse. However, the sanctification of the unbelieving spouse cannot be the same "sanctification" as that of the believing and converted spouse. The sanctification of the unbelieving spouse is not by God as is the case for the converted spouse. The sanctification of the unbelieving spouse is in that he accepts the believing spouse's conversion without himself being converted. It sets him or her

apart from all those married to unconverted spouses who refuse to continue living with the converted spouse.

In this sense, the unbelieving spouse is set apart or sanctified as compared to other unbelieving spouses who don't accept the other spouse's conversion and decide to leave the marriage.

The sanctification of the believing spouse is to having been set apart from the world's way of thinking by their acceptance of the spiritual truth of God they have been given to know and living their lives accordingly to the best of their ability.

Both the believing and the unbelieving spouses are sanctified or set apart but not in the same way; the believing spouse is set apart from the world and the unbelieving spouse who stays with his converted spouse is set apart from those who break up their marriage because of their spouses' conversion.

How are the children holy?

Only God and the Word are holy and those who become converted become holy by God and the Word's holiness being imputed to them as it is not possible for them to ever actually be holy as God is holy in this life as flesh-and-blood human beings. If someone falls away, they lose their holiness because they were not themselves holy. They were holy only by imputation by God of His holiness conditional upon them maintaining their conversion.

As per the Greek word used in 1Co7:14 for the word "holy" one of its meaning is to be "ceremonially consecrated" which is not the same thing as God actually imputing His holiness to those who are called and chosen.

The children of a couple where one of the spouse is unconverted cannot have God's holiness imputed to them because one of the spouses is converted. This kind of holiness like the sanctification of the unconverted spouse is not from God nor can it be.

The holiness of the children is derived from the converted spouse in the family in the same way that God's holiness comes from God upon truly converted Christians who become part of God's family. The significant difference is that children's holiness is from the converted spouse and not from God as they are not called, God is not with them or dwelling in them and is not imputing His own holiness to them as He does to all truly converted Christians who are remaining faithful.

Essentially, Paul was encouraging married members of God's church whose spouses were not converted to not to break up their marriages. Their continuing to maintain their marriage results in the sanctification of the unconverted spouse and in the children being holy but with the significant differences pointed out in the previous paragraphs.

It was for the same reason that the ministry taught this understanding to the married members of the WCG who were living with unconverted spouses. It encouraged them to not break up their marriage if the unconverted spouse was happy to live with them. It also, gave the converted member hope that one day by their example their unconverted husband might become converted, and it was pleasant for them to think that their children were considered holy.

But again, though the words "sanctified" and "holy" were used for the unconverted spouse and their children, the meaning of the words is not and cannot be the same as for a converted person. They only applied to the unconverted spouse and children in a narrow and physical sense as previously explained. The unconverted "sanctified" spouses and the unconverted "holy" children of these marriages could not without being called and chosen ever become part of God's Kingdom.

Without being called it is not possible to understand or accept God level spiritual truth which can only be known by revelation (1Co2:14, Eph 3:3 quoted below).

The unconverted are carnal minded, hostile to God's law and cannot be subject to it (Rom 8:7).

**Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.**

The unconverted are all those who have not been called and do not have the holy spirit God the Father and the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman dwelling in them.

There is no possible in-between state of being partially converted or somewhat converted. One is or is not converted.

God's spiritual truth is foolishness to the unconverted.

**1Co 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are *spiritually discerned*.**

### On Children Becoming Converted

All true Christians have a strong desire for their spouse and children to become converted. When the husband and the wife are converted, there is high hope that their children will follow in their footsteps. They try to teach them as much as they can of God's truth in the hope that in time as they grow up, they will make the decision to become converted as they will have had some exposure to some of God's spiritual truth.

But, no one can come to Christ unless the Father calls him .

Joh 6:44 **No man** can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Joh 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that **no man** can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

The spiritual truth of God is a mystery to the unconverted and it can only be known and understood if it is given by God for them to understand it.

Mar 4:11 And he said unto them, Unto you [**those called and chosen by God the Father**] it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, [**the unconverted**] all these things are done in parables: [**so they will not understand**]

Eph 3:3 How that by **revelation** he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

We who were once members of the WCG, have seen how the children of the converted most of the time did not become converted adults. As soon as they became independent of the parents, they fully and openly went into the world and did many of the things mentioned in Rom 1; 24-30. These verses are talking about the fate of those who were once converted and who fall away but it is also an enumeration of the evils that previously converted and unconverted men do. You don't need to have been converted and fallen away to engage in the evil mentioned in these verses. They are what the never converted and those falling away do.

Rom 1:24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

Rom 1:25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and wor-

shipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

Rom 1:26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

Rom 1:27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

Rom 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Rom 1:29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

Rom 1:30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boast-ers, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents

Also see the works of the flesh mentioned in Gal 5: 19-21.

Mr. Armstrong, the Pastor General of the WCG like any parent, so much wanted for his son to be deeply converted and in his case, be the one who would take over the administration of the WCG upon his death. Those of us who know the history of what happened with his son, know that he left the WCG and founded his own church taking with him many of the members of the WCG including ministers.

We also know that he had a problem with gambling and women but I need not go into any detail for you to realize that he did not follow in his father's footsteps.

The sad truth is that regardless of the amount of exposure to the truth one may have had, this does not, in most instances, result in conversion whether it be children in a family, an unconverted spouse pleased to dwell with a converted spouse or the son of a pastor general.

If simple exposure to the truth would result in conversion or make conversion more likely, then the children of the converted would in many instances, grow up to be converted members of God's church but that is not what happened.

God's has a plan for bringing about the salvation of mankind and this is that the Father calls men and the Son teaches them. It is just not possible for people to become converted by simply exposing them to the truth no matter how clearly and persuasively we explain it to them. If they are not being called, it is all foolishness to them.

1Co 2:14 But the natural man [not converted] receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for **they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them**, because they are **spiritually discerned**.

And the danger of pushing it on them is that they will become hostile which is why Christ tells Christians the following.

Mat 7:6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

God's truth is spiritually discerned and cannot be known by those who are unconverted including the children of the converted, unless God the Father calls them.

### Conclusion

I understand that for some, maybe many of you, it will be discouraging to come to the realization that your children don't enjoy a special benefit from one or both parents being converted.

God in due time will call the children of the converted as well as all men who have ever lived and died and were never called. That's how His plan of salvation works. All will be given the same chance to become converted. God is the one who decides when someone is to be called; it cannot be the doing of men or result from simply being exposed to the truth.

The spirit in man gives man's animal brain mind power and the holy spirit God the Father and the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman give man's animal brain the ability to understand God's spiritual truth.

Spiritual truth cannot be taught but by the holy spirits of the God family.

This is not to say that parents have no role or responsibility in raising their children to be good, law-abiding citizens. This is the training that parents can give their children and that they will not forget once they are old.

