

BOOK EXTRACT: CHILDHOOD, ADOLESCENCE AND WORK

The following quotes by David Barton are from a book by Steven Maxwell called 'Preparing Sons to Provide for a Single Income Family'. This book questions the 'leisure-focus' of our society and proposes that young people who are encouraged to pursue 'productive' activities in their youth can look forward to the increasingly rare privilege of raising a family on a single income. It raises some issues that are well worth considering before your children reach that age.

Throughout history, the goal of child training has been to train children to be responsible, mature adults. Quite frankly, adolescence has never been marked by its maturity nor productivity; therefore, the desire was to shorten adolescence as much as possible.

Today, for whatever reason, we attempt to prolong adolescence and unfortunately embed the tendencies of adolescence in the adult (decisions made based on what is fun or enjoyable rather than what is right; the world revolving around the individual child, etc). Consequently, we have far too many adults who still act like adolescents, displaying their selfishness and immaturity in public office, in professional sports, in media, in marriage, and every other arena.

By withholding work from children when they are young, I believe that parents may be acting from several erroneous assumptions: that children must 'enjoy' their childhood and therefore work is not compatible with childhood; that work is not or cannot be fun; and that the Bible does not address this issue. None of these assumptions is correct, nor has the fruit of such assumptions proven beneficial in our society.