



# Pastor Chuck Orchards

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## From Pastor Chuck's Apple Barrel:

### MAY / JUNE 2008

#### A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR CHUCK

##### When It Comes to Children & Apples Trees: Does Nature or Nurture Rule?

Years ago, I took a class on pruning apple trees. I will never forget a comment made by the instructor: "Each branch on an apple tree attempts to become the lead branch!"

Have you ever looked at an old, neglected apple tree? Every branch is reaching for the sky, reaching for sunlight. The purpose of pruning a tree is to allow it to find its natural growth, shape, maturity, and productivity. With gentle guidance (pruning), you can help a tree discover its most fruit-producing shape. For instance, a branch that grows perpendicular to the ground will produce less, stunted fruit, but a branch that is more horizontal receives greater sunlight and moisture, thereby, producing abundantly.

I couldn't help but to draw a parallel to how we rear our children. Like a branch, every child has a desire to be in charge of his or her own life. to lead. We see this during the "terrible twos" when a child struggles to find direction. In some cases, parents take a very hands-off attitude and their child develops no positive self-discipline. In other instances, we witness parents who discipline so rigidly that their child's sense of self is crushed. Perhaps, a better approach might be to "prune" our children.

As with an apple tree, we must nurture our children. To prune a tree properly, you must first study it, find its contours, growth directions, and possibilities, and, ultimately, discover its greatest potential.

So, too, with children, patience, observation, and understanding of their growth potential and direction is the first step toward healthy nurturing. In light of this connection, let me recommend a lovely book on the need to observe and nurture our children: One of a Kind: Making the Most of Your Child's Uniqueness, by Lavonne Neff.

The question remains: Is it nature or nurture? I believe it is both - with apple trees and children. It begins with nature but loving nurture is necessary to guide each toward productive, abundant lives.

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