

PARENTING WORKSHOP

May 2021

Raising Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the LORD

“...and let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet to be created may praise the LORD.” Psalm 102:18



PA BIBLE
TEACHING FELLOWSHIP

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Introduction

- To better understand the calling, responsibility and importance that God has entrusted to parents;
- To better understand how parenting done in alignment with God's purposes and design is ultimately a means by which we glory Him;
- To better understand the biblical truths of parenting regarding authority and shepherding of a child's life and heart;
- To identify *biblical* methods of communicating the gospel, disciple/correction and aligning the goals for our children with God's goals;
- To work towards crafting a family-specific plan for:
 - How and when to intentionally lead your family in worship and discipleship;
 - How to improve clarity and consistency within your family structure for leading your children.

Parenting is humbling and hard work – it is also the source of some of our greatest joys and blessings as we see our children grow in their walk with God. One of the greatest callings in life is to be *disciple-makers* in our own homes. Your spiritual leadership, guidance and service to your children is one of the most important things you will ever do in your life.

This is not a comprehensive look at parenting, by any means – the goal is to 1) set the heart and vision for parenting for the glory of God, and 2) outline a handful of biblical principles for how to do so. We will provide some scriptural references regarding these topics, but they are in no way exhaustive. It is our hope that many of these scriptures and topics will be starting points in your own study of what the Bible says about parenting.

We'll also invest some time in identifying practical and actionable ways you and your family can begin to plan purposeful times to share the gospel with your children and the methods by which you can be ready to lead your child's heart with the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

We also recognize that there are many particular aspects of parenting that are family and child-specific. God's Word is abundantly clear about many foundational aspects of parenting that are applicable to all – He has also graciously and freely given to us His gift of Holy Spirit to direct our steps with abundant wisdom on those matters that are not clearly handled in Scripture.

As a note of encouragement: parenting is not easy work, often thankless, and sometimes we are ourselves our harshest critics. When and where there is clearer light from God's Word regarding parenting that produces a need for change, let it be change from a standpoint of humility, growth, desire to bear fruit for His glory, and the assurance that our merciful and gracious God is the ultimate Teacher in our lives.

Teaching #1: The Why of Parenting

For His Glory Alone: Parenting in a Godward Orientation

What is our goal as parents (and in life)?

Jeremiah 9:23-24 ESV

23 Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches,

24 but ***let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me...***

- Children, like all humans, are designed and built for worship.
- Children, like all humans, are either responding to God in believing or suppressing the truth in unrighteousness. (**Romans 1:18-21**)
- The heart is not neutral – your child *will* worship something.
 - The question is not, "Will he worship?" The question is "Whom will he worship?"
- This clearly depicts the importance and the ultimate goal of everything in life, including parenting: all things are to be done with a purpose toward God's glory.

Parenting for God, under God, with God and towards God ("Godward orientation") fundamentally changes everything about the "how" we parent.

The Calling and Importance of Parenting

- Parents have an incredibly important calling and responsibility from God – He is unequivocal in His direct commands to parents.
 - Children need a guide, and you are the ones to guide them.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 ESV

4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

7 ***You shall teach them diligently to your children***, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

- This is a command;
- This is to be done with diligence;
- This is to be done in an all-encompassing manner ("all day");
- This is for loving God with our "everything"

God has a clear demand and goal for parents: one generation is to teach the next generation to walk in His ways and obey His commands.

- **You cannot “outsource” this responsibility. You cannot “subcontract” this to grandparents, church community, or Bible videos.** (Those are all great, by the way!)
 - This is of utmost importance to God – this isn’t optional or recommended. This is the *direct instruction of God to all parents*.
 - The calling is high: you have been **delegated** as God-given authorities to **shepherd your child’s heart** to know Him, love Him and obey Him.
- *The primary purpose of the household is for children to come to a saving knowledge of and discipleship to the Lord Jesus Christ.*
 - It is not primarily the comforts and whims of your children; nor is it their worldly successes and wealth. The primary goal of them being in your house is to know God and love God.

Psalm 78:4-7 ESV

4 We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.

5 He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children,

6 that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children,

7 so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments;

- Why diligently teach our children? That they would 1) set their hope in God; 2) not forget the works of God; and 3) keep His commandments.
- (Notable for those grandparents: there are many, many generations referenced here!)

The purpose of communicating to the next generation is that they would learn to trust God for themselves, never forgetting His wonderful works, all leading to obedience.

God’s Design for Parenting: Authority and Honor

Ephesians 6:1-4 ESV

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

2 "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise),

3 "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."

- As a parent, you have authority because God calls you to be an authority in your child’s life. You are in charge.
- This is not authority for *your* purposes or pleasures – they are for *His*.

- Authority means you are **leading, shepherding and stewarding your child's life in God's behalf** – not with the goal of holding them under your power, but to ***empower them to be self-controlled people living freely under authority of God.***
- Authority is often misunderstood because we see many, many examples of it done poorly in the world. God's order for all things is centered around authority.
- Honor – “to respect, revere” same word as “value”

This reframes everything about parenting: discharging the duty of parenting with confidence, vision, direction and steadfastness will derive from an assurance that God has called you and equipped you to lead your children.

- We see the greatest example of loving authority in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ:
 - **John 13** – Jesus, the one whom the Father had given all authority in heaven and earth, took on a towel and washed the disciples' feet.

Ephesians 6:4 ESV

4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but ***bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.***

How has God established authority over my life?

- God's authority over my life provides boundaries of protection, blessings, love, care, and mercy. **That's** the model of authority we have been given by God for our children.

Obedience and its purpose

Obedience is the willing submission of one person to the authority of another. It is the proper response to authority.

Ephesians 6:1-3 ESV

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

2 "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise),

3 "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."

Besides it being a **clear command from Scriptures**, there are two primary reasons why we teach our children to obey.

1. Obedience and honor is a place of blessing, protection and well-being for your child;
 2. It is training in the fundamental aspects of their life with God which will be absolutely essential as they grow on their own.
- A call to consistency – *inconsistency undercuts the effectiveness of authority*
 - Obedience will often mean doing the things they don't want to do;
 - We are not chasing after perfection – but we are chasing after upholding God's Word as the standard in all things.

The goal of obedience

John 14:21 ESV

21 Whoever has my commandments and **keeps them**, he it is who **loves me**. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."

John 15:10-11 ESV

10 If you **keep my commandments**, you will **abide in my love**, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that **your joy may be full**.

- The end goal is not dutiful obedience or rote behavior – the point is learning and teaching the commands of God and to obey them *that we might grow to know and love our Lord Jesus Christ and our Heavenly Father*.
- Help them obey – authorities that are supplying, equipping and preemptive in knowing their needs

Parenting is “Heart” Work: How the Heart Drives Behavior

Actions flows from the heart

Proverbs 4:23 ESV

23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

Mark 7:20-22 ESV

20 And he said, *"What comes out of a person is what defiles him.*

21 For from *within, out of the heart of man*, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery,

22 coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.

Luke 6 corroborates this point.

Luke 6:43-45 ESV

43 "For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit,

44 for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush.

45 The *good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good*, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, **for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks**.

What your children say and do is a reflection of what is in their hearts.

- Behavior is *not* the central issue – the critical understanding of parenting is that the heart is the central matter in all that we do.
 - This means **engaging them**, not just reproofing them!

- Getting to the “heart” in parenting will inform everything we do: how we train and discipline, how we share the gospel, and what our goals for our children will be.
- We do not want to raise “Pharisees” and hypocrites...
 - **Matthew 23:25** – “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.”
 - **This is God’s job to change the heart** – co-laboring with Him (1 Corinthians 3), but He is the one that brings the increase.

Vision

One of the greatest privileges you will ever have in your life is caring for, shepherding and stewarding your child’s life and heart to know and love God.

The stakes are high. Sections in **Psalm 139** (“You knitted me together in my mother’s womb...”) and **Romans 8** (“those he foreknew he predestined to be conformed to the image of his dear son...”) give a glimpse into God’s perspective of His people – one that spans all of eternity. What we do and how we raise our children is of eternal significance to God.

So, pray. Pray a lot. Pray about specifics, pray about generalities, but mostly pray to have a vision for your children that God has for them.

Ephesians 1:17-19 ESV

17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him,

18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,

19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe...

God has purposes and plans for your children – it’s your responsibility to shepherd their hearts and guide them to know God and obey Him.

Summary

- **God’s chief goal** (and therefore, *our* chief goal) in parenting: raising the next generation to follow and obey Him;
- **Teaching the gospel and making disciples** is the primary function of a household;
- **Parental authority** is loving, shepherding and guiding a child’s heart to be self-controlled to freely submit their lives to God’s authority;
- **Obedience** is one of the primary ways we teach children about God and His authority;
- The **heart drives behavior** – guiding and nurturing a child’s heart will bring true change in actions, as opposed to focusing solely on “behavior modification.”

Teaching #2: Biblical Methods of Parenting

“Every Christian family ought to be as it were a ‘little church,’ consecrated to Christ, and wholly influenced and governed by his rules.” – Jonathan Edwards (1750)

In the first teaching we’ve seen the clear direction from God’s Word regarding:

- **God’s chief goal** (and therefore, *our* chief goal) in parenting: raising the next generation to follow and obey Him;
- **Teaching the gospel and making disciples** is the primary function of a household;
- **Parental authority** is loving, shepherding and guiding a child’s heart to be self-controlled to freely submit their lives to God’s authority;
- **Obedience** is one of the primary ways we teach children about God and His authority;
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Considering Some Biblical Methods of Parenting

Training

Ephesians 6:1-4

- *“nurture”* – “the whole training and education of children (which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals, and employs for this purpose commands, admonitions, reproof and punishment). It also includes the training and care of the body.”
- Doing nothing is still doing something...
- “Don’t be weary in well doing.”
 - This is a marathon – a little bit each day, don’t lose sight of the goal.
- “Don’t provoke them to anger...”
 - Fathers, do not place undue burdens on your children. Do we have unrealistic expectations? Consider *selfishness, severity* and *inconsistency*.
- Training in what?

2 Timothy 3:15 KJV

15 And that from a child thou hast known the **holy scriptures**, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Communication

- **James 1:19 ESV** – Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger;
- This is also very true for raising children
 - Listen to them!
 - Remember that the heart drives behavior. Ask them what is bothering them and have a genuine concern for their heart.

- Words that build up, encourage

Colossians 3:21

21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become **discouraged**.

- While we may be most closely acquainted to our children’s quirks, foibles and shortcomings, it is imperative that we **encourage** them and **advocate** for them as their biggest supporters.

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 ESV

11 For you know how, like a father with his children,

12 we **exhorted** each one of you and **encouraged you** and **charged you** to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

Some other points to consider:

- Ask God for help on how to communicate His Word so that your child will understand.
- Give direction on what they *should* be doing, not just on what they *shouldn’t be doing*. Have clear, simple, easy to remember verses ready to instruct them.
- Use stories, analogies, parables, physical/tangible items and songs to communicate the truth of God’s Word – (see sections such as Luke 15 and 1 Corinthians 12)
- Communicate with humility and meekness – parents will fall short, too! Use that as an opportunity to show your child that we all need to be humble and meek to God’s teaching and correction.

Discipline and Correction

- There is no “balance” you need to achieve between discipline and love

Proverbs 3:11-12 ESV

11 My son, do not despise the LORD’s discipline or be weary of his reproof,

12 for the LORD **reproves him whom he loves**, as a father the son in whom he delights.

- God disciplines us for our good. The function of his discipline is primarily *not punitive* – it is *corrective* with a view to partaking in God’s holiness.

Consider two men who had prominent responsibilities in serving God and the consequences they had in not disciplining their households: Eli and David.

1 Samuel 3:12-13 ESV

12 On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end.

13 And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, *because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them*.

1 Kings 1:5-6 ESV

5 Now Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, "I will be king." And he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him.

6 *His father had never at any time displeased him by asking, "Why have you done thus and so?"*

- In both situations it seemed to result from *a lack of restraint or a desire to not upset them*. There are crucial moments in the life of a young person – we want to be there with godly and clear counsel.

God's discipline of us produces fruit

Hebrews 12:7-11 ESV

7 It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. ***For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?***

8 If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

9 Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?

10 For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but ***he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.***

11 For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

- "discipline" - cultivates the soul, especially by correcting mistakes and curbing the passions.
- God corrects and disciplines us for our profit, that we might partake in His holiness. Sometimes this correction grieves us – but ultimately it yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness. **We model the same for our children.**
- **Selfishness, rebellion and sin are not outgrown** – as parents we must teach and instruct our children of the freedom and truth in Christ.
- **The challenge of inconvenience** – we mostly understand the priority of discipline and correction for our children, yet the *inconvenience* of correction is often the most prominent obstacle in our way to implement it.
 - Tired, busy, "What will others think?"

The Rod of correction

- The rod of correction symbolizes God's loving correction and authority over your life, and the loving correction and authority He has given you in instructing your child.
- The rod of correction is for protection, loving reproof and for leading a child's heart back to the comforts of God's Word.

Psalm 23:4 – "...thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

Proverbs 22:15 ESV

15 Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him.

Proverbs 29:15, 17 ESV

15 The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.

17 Discipline your son, and he will give you rest; he will give delight to your heart.

- The rod of correction should always be used in conjunction with *teaching*
- It is not *punitive* in nature – it is *corrective*.
- Remember that we represent God and His Word to your child – correction is *always* to be done with love, never for selfish reasons or out of anger.
- The goal of disciplined instruction is to *build respect in their hearts for God's Word* – we do that by instilling in our children a respect for our words
 - **Remember:** consistency, forgiveness and showing mercy (teaching moments)

Aligning our goals with God's Word

Proverbs 23:15-16 ESV

15 My son, if your heart is wise, my heart too will be glad.

16 My inmost being will exult when your lips speak what is right.

Proverbs 23:22-25 ESV

22 Listen to your father who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.

23 Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding.

24 The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice; he who fathers a wise son will be glad in him.

25 Let your father and mother be glad; let her who bore you rejoice.

- As we saw in the first section, the chief aim of man is God's glory. Accordingly, parenting's chief goal is to glory God by bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord so that another generation would know Him and love Him.
- Unfortunately, we can sometimes lose sight of that goal and replace the ultimate goal with poor substitutes. These things in and of themselves may be good for your child, but they are not biblical goals or successes.
 - Are the basic values of our homes based on human tradition and the basic principles of this world, or on Christ?
 - "I press on toward the mark of the prize of the upward calling in Christ."

Modeling the Gospel

Family values and shaping influences

Genesis 18 & 19 – two examples: Abraham and Lot

Genesis 18:17-19 ESV – 17 The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, 18 seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19 For I have chosen him, ***that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice***, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him."

Genesis 19:12-14 ESV – 12 Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of the place. 13 For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it." 14 So Lot went out and said to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, "Up! Get out of this place, for the LORD is about to destroy the city." ***But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be jesting.***

- We see a glimpse at the reaction Lot's family had when he took seriously the commands of God: they thought he was *joking*.
 - How much reverence to God and His commands was in that household and family?
- What do we mean by "everyday gospel"?
 - Examples of the "everyday gospel" with your children
 - Prayer
 - Bible reading
 - Family worship
 - Church community
 - Service

Immerse *your* heart in God's Word

1 Timothy 4:15-16 ESV

15 Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress.

16 Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

- One of the greatest gifts we can give to our children is a household where the gospel of Christ is upheld everyday.
- A key way you can ensure God's Word will be taught and lived is if it is first presented and believed in your heart. There are no shortcuts with this.

It starts with a plan...

- Like it or not, we are not going to "drift" toward raising our children with a Godward orientation, a gospel-centered perspective and able to respond well to the inevitable challenges that arise.
- Building a family-specific plan that purposefully aligns biblical truths with actions is a helpful way to have *direction and vision*.

- We aren't aiming to put a "formula" to dedicated gospel-teaching time, nor should we be bound to following a schedule. But a plan can help us be more intentional about when and where we are teaching the Word of God to our children.
- Think about specific times, circumstance or events that present tension with raising your child. Think about the values you

Proverbs 29:18

"Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keeps the law, happy is he."

Discussion questions and worksheet

- Work with your spouse or family to identify the situations or behaviors that often bring about disobedience in your child (i.e. not sharing, resistance at bedtime).
 - What are those specific situations? How do you currently handle them? What are specific ways you can change your responses to better reach their heart with the gospel? (Perhaps even write down the exact way you and your spouse might respond.)
- Why is it so easy to get sidetracked with behavior when issues of the heart are clearly so much more important?
 - In what ways or in what specific circumstances do you get sidetracked or distracted from getting to the heart of your child? What are specific actions you can take to remedy this?
- If the point of discipline is to direct the heart, how does that change our approach to discipline and correction?
 - Think about a specific challenge or area of discipline your child needs. In what ways do you approach that with a **“heart-first”** approach or a **“behavior-first”** approach? How might you change your approach?
- If you asked them, what would your children identify as the **values of your family**? What are the things that matter most to you?
 - Reflect on what it is that we value in our kids, what we praise them for, what we say we are most proud of them about.
 - In the next few weeks, what are the three things that you value about your child that you want to tell him or her?
- **Where do you want to see your child in 10 years? 20 years?** What do you want your child to be like when they graduate high school (for example)? What would “success” look like for your family?
 - Consider some of these keywords to get you started: *smart; most likely to succeed; honor; reverence; respect; athletic; purity; hard work; money; curious; lots of friends; service.*
 - What are the characteristics you want most to see in your child? What are the changes you can make to help your child learn to build those characteristics?
- How are you and your spouse (or family) praying for your children? What are the specifics of your prayers? What might be areas of your child’s life and heart that you can pray to God more directly?

For non-parents/grandparents:

1. In light of teaching #1, what are topics that stood out to you? What did you learn? What specific actions can you take during this season of life you are in to prepare/help with parenting?
2. In light of teaching #2, how might you model these behaviors in your own life? What are ways you can prepare for parenting (or help others parent) with this information?

“Teach Them Diligently” – Sample Schedule

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
Sunday	Attend church together Family dinner and share	Attend church together	Attend church together Family dinner and share	Attend church together
Monday	Pray before school/bed	Pray before school/bed	Pray before school/bed	Pray before school/bed
Tuesday	Pray before school/bed	Pray before school/bed	Pray before school/bed	Pray before school/bed
Wednesday	Family devotional Bedtime: Read/pray/sing	Family devotional Bedtime: Read/pray/sing	Family devotional Bedtime: Read/pray/sing	Family devotional Bedtime: Read/pray/sing
Thursday	Small group fellowship How to involve kids?	Small group fellowship How to involve kids?	Small group fellowship How to involve kids?	Small group fellowship How to involve kids?
Friday	Family fellowship time	Family fellowship time	Family fellowship time	Family fellowship time
Saturday	Bible with Breakfast, listen to worship music	Bible with Breakfast, listen to worship music	Bible with Breakfast, listen to worship music	Bible with Breakfast, listen to worship music

(Think about your family’s schedule – look for ways to incorporate the gospel of Jesus Christ into your everyday life as well as dedicating special time to teaching your children about God’s Word.)

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
Sunday				
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				