

PARENTING WORKSHOP

Part II

January 2022

Christ-Centered Parenting

“Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be my disciples.” **John 15:8**



PA BIBLE
TEACHING FELLOWSHIP

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
TEACHING #1: RELATIONSHIPS AND DISCIPLESHIP	3
DISCIPLES AND DISCIPLESHIP	4
TEACHING #2: CONSCIENCE, COMMUNICATION AND CULTURE	6
CONSCIENCE	6
COMMUNICATION	7
CULTURE (SHAPING INFLUENCES)	9
TEACHING #3: AGE-APPROPRIATE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	11
CHILDREN AGES 0-5: LEARNING AUTHORITY	11
CHILDREN AGES 6-12: CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT	11
CHILDREN 13 AND OLDER: SHEPHERDING	12
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND WORKSHEET	13
LIST CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT GOALS FROM THESE PASSAGES:	13
APPENDIX 1: SOME IDEAS FOR FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP	14
APPENDIX 2: “TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY” – SAMPLE SCHEDULE	15

Introduction

- To better understand the importance of Christ-centered living for Christ-centered parenting;
- To better understand how child-rearing is primarily focused on making disciples;
- To better understand some of the common, day-to-day aspects of parenting that every parent can consider and evaluate godly ways to grow, including:
 - Communication
 - Conscience
 - Culture
- To identify age-appropriate goals for various stages of childhood;
- 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 for this workshop is to 1) provide a brief consideration of the importance and priority on making disciples in our child-rearing; 2) outline a handful of common topic areas, such as communication, culture and conflict, that typically provide challenges for day-to-day parenting; and 3) a brief overview of some of the “age-appropriate” goals for various stages of childhood. 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 revisit the worksheets that you may have filled out during Part I of the parenting workshop – with a particular focus on building family worship and discipleship into your family’s weekly routine.

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 often we are our own 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: Relationships and Discipleship

“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.” – 1 Timothy 4:16 ESV

“The greatest need of my people is my personal holiness.” - Robert Murray M’Cheyne

Personal devotion and holiness – Christ-centered parenting starts with Christ-centered living.

Growing in one’s relationship with God directly affects one’s parenting

- It is no understatement to say that one of the best ways you grow as a parent is to grow in your daily devotion and personal holiness before God.
- To effectively teach your children to be disciples, you must first prioritize your own discipleship to the Lord Jesus Christ!

Consider one of our theme verses from Session I:

Deuteronomy 6:3-5

Hear therefore, O Israel, and **be careful to do them**, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”

Immediately preceding the section of Deuteronomy 6 about teaching and instructing our children daily in our day-to-day lives is a command to take heed to God’s Word ourselves.

“And these words that I command you today shall be on **your heart**. 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. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

Neglecting to tend the garden of our own soul threatens to undermine our effective parenting perhaps more than anything else!

The importance of parents following Christ

- It is vital that parents model Christ-like behaviors to their children. Like Paul in Philippians 3:17, parents need to be able to say to their children, “...*be followers together of me...*” as we seek to follow Christ.

Disciples and Discipleship

Discipleship as the goal

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...” **Matthew 28:19**

- Including (and especially!) in our own homes!

“Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be my disciples.” **John 15:8**

Discipleship – a follower, a pupil, one who is disciplined to adhere to a teacher

Discipleship is intentional

“A sower went out to sow...” **Luke 8:5-15**

- To carry the analogy, in the garden of a child's heart, a parent will engage in tilling, removing rocks, weeding and watering. This takes careful attention to a child's heart and a purposeful intention to care for them.

Discipleship as Christ modeled

- Effective discipleship of our children requires that *we follow the Word* and provide them with Holy Spirit-inspired leadership.
- As parents mature spiritually and grow together in unity, their leadership in the home will grow.

Parental Leadership and Authority

- As parents, we can and should use discipline and instruction to point a willful child toward becoming a willing disciple.
- However, as we saw in Session I, this is accomplished not by manipulation or overly harsh consequences, but by providing the child with effective leadership.
- Parental leadership provides clear guidance that includes planned and purposeful discipline that is communicated effectively. When rooted in Biblical wisdom (see Proverbs 1) it can produce God-reverencing fruit and discernment.

Discipleship takes time

- As children change, so too do their developmental and spiritual needs – prayer for your child is critical to understanding what their spiritual nourishment and discipleship warrants from you

Establishing marital harmony as the basis of parenting

- God uses the marital relationship between a man and a woman as a picture of the church's relationship with Christ (**Ephesians 5**)

- Parents who live out scriptural principles in their marriage are helping their children develop a healthier understanding of their relationship with their Creator. Children thrive on safety and security. When there is strife in the marital relationship, safety and security are compromised. Parents need to make their marriage a priority.

Establishing a pattern of prioritizing communal worship

- Our children watch our behaviors and model our priorities – prioritizing church attendance and regular communal worship is one of the most important ways we demonstrate to our children the importance of a godly, disciplined life.
 - If we come up with excuses for why attending the teaching of God’s word and worshipping with His people isn’t a priority, let us not be particularly surprised when our children do not prioritize it.

Consider the time that Jesus invested in the 12 disciples – and consider the vision he had for their lives when they perhaps didn’t have a vision for their own lives – and then align that to our role as parents. **Discipleship costs a lot, but it’s worth it!**

PERSONAL REFLECTION – How am I doing in this area? (Also included in worksheet)

- How is your relationship with God? Are you growing with Him?
- How is your relationship with your spouse? Is it modeling the type of relationship that reflects God’s design?
- How is your relationship with your children? Would they say with confidence that they feel your love? Do they know you have clear expectations and standards for their behavior?
- Identify at least two action items as to how you could build a healthier relationship with your child.

Teaching #2: Conscience, Communication and Culture

Conscience

What is the conscience? The capacity that reasons about good and evil, that which distinguishes between right and wrong.

Romans 2 demonstrates that the **conscience** is always at work in all people.

Romans 2:14-15 ESV

14 For when **Gentiles**, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. 15 They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their **conscience also bears witness**, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them...

“Of course, the conscience is not infallible. We can have an *evil conscience* that doesn’t turn away from sin (**Heb. 10:22**). We can have a *seared conscience* that no longer feels bad for evil (**1 Tim. 4:2**). We can have a *weak conscience* that feels bad for things that aren’t really bad (**1 Cor. 8:7–12**). And we can have a *defiled conscience* that loses its ability to discern right from wrong (**Titus 1:15**). The conscience is no substitute for the Bible and must never be in opposition to it.” – Kevin DeYoung

The point is that one’s conscience (especially in our children) is a wonderful gift from God that is given as a moral and spiritual compass – but requires calibration according to truth.

Your most powerful appeals to your kids will be appeals that smite the conscience.

Jesus’ interaction with the Pharisees in **Matthew 21:28-32, 33-46**

- Parable of the two sons—Jesus asks a question that appeals to the conscience
- Parable of the vineyard—Pharisees indicted themselves by their answer to Jesus
 - **Christ appeals to conscience – to their sense of right and wrong – dealing with root issues, not just surface issues**
 - Christ is answering their original question (verse 23) – one that is about his authority and that challenges his authority

Here is the pattern. Christ appeals to their conscience so they cannot escape the implications of their sin. Thus, he deals with the root problems, not just the surface issues.

Conscience may seem like a daunting theological term for parenting. But simply put: it’s a knowing in oneself of the standard for right and wrong.

We want our children’s conscience to be alive, aware and acute to God’s Word as the standard of right and wrong.

How the gospel shapes the conscience of a child

- The central focus of childrearing is to bring children to a *sober assessment of themselves as sinners*. They must understand the mercy of God, who offered Christ as a sacrifice for sinners – **yes, they need to understand they are included in Romans 1-3!**
- How is that accomplished? You must address the heart as the fountain of behavior, and the conscience as the God-given judge of right and wrong. The cross of Christ must be the central focus of your childrearing.
- Your children need heart change.
 - Change in the heart begins with conviction of sin. Conviction of sin comes through the conscience. Your children need to be convicted that they have defected from God and are covenant-breakers. They must come to the conviction that the inner man, who relates to God, is an idolater—guilty before God. To help them, you must appeal to the conscience.

Christ-centered parenting must be focused on the redemptive nature of his work at the cross – this is the goal and focus of our job as parents, disciple-makers and conscience-shapers.

Communication

Proverbs 25:11, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.”

Proverbs 18:13, “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.”

Ephesians 4:29, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”

Colossians 4:6, “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

Focus on understanding

- If we focus on the heart, our focus will be on the gospel – we have no other place to go but the cross!
- Spend time observing your children – not the same thing for each child!

We need to be people who are able to draw others out (Proverbs 20:5):

- a. Learn to ask good qualitative questions that can't be answered by “yes” or “no.”
- b. We need to listen to what is being said
- c. Also listen for what is not being said
- d. Let your child know that you delight in them

Communication is not just an event, it's a lifestyle

- Often parents are too busy to talk unless something is wrong. Communication must be ongoing, all the time – this prepares for the difficult and strained moments.
 - The GOAL of communication: **shepherding the heart**
 - Help children understand themselves... how God works... how sin works... how the Gospel comes to them in their greatest needs... their motivations, wishes, desires... encouraging faith in Jesus Christ
1. *Honest, true communication is expensive, it takes time*
 2. *Children require time and flexibility from their parents*
 3. *Kids don't pour out their hearts on schedule/on demand*
 4. *A wise parent learns to talk when their kids are in the mood to talk*
 5. *It is challenging to be a good listener to your kids*
 6. *When your children are ready to talk, you have to be ready to engage them – we need to stop... listen... think about what's being said or not said... praying silently... requires physical and spiritual stamina*
 7. *We must be prepared to be honest with our kids – admitting sin, seeking forgiveness for sinning against our children*

How are you maintaining a culture of communication and conversation in your home?

Types of communication (from Proverbs)

- i. Encouragement
- ii. Correction
- iii. Rebuke
- iv. Entreaty
- v. Instruction
- vi. Warning
- vii. Teaching
- viii. Prayer

Building Trust – John 10:3-4

- Healthy relationships are built through experiences.
- Consider **John 10:3-4**, where the sheep follow the Shepherd because they know His voice. This would lead us to believe the sheep had heard the Shepherd's voice before and had experiences that led them to trust that He had their best interests in mind.

Knowing Your Child

A core aspect of relationships is knowing and being known by someone. This takes time, effort, sacrifice, and shared experiences. Consider how this applies to the parent-child relationship. How well would your child say that you know what is truly going on in their life?

Our children have spiritual, physical, emotional/soul needs

- Are they unhappy because they are disobeying, or disobeying because they are unhappy?
 - The difference between childishness and defiance
- The goal is always reconnection after conflict
 - Reestablish the close connection
 - Reconciliation and forgiveness
- Showing interest and being engaged
- Letting your purpose be known

PERSONAL REFLECTION – How am I doing in this area?

- What are your strengths when it comes to communication? What are your spouse's strengths when it comes to communication? Your child's?
- In what ways could your communication improve? What changes could you make that would help you communicate better with others?

Culture (Shaping Influences)

Romans 12:2 ESV –

2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Unless we are actively discipling our kids, the world will disciple them for us.

So what is the job of a Christian parent? *Faithfulness*. Parents are given the task of creating a culture of faith that intentionally uses all of life to point their children toward a lifelong relationship with God. We are called to equip them for life.

We can neither embrace a culture that is in opposition to the teachings of Jesus, nor hide away from a world that Christ came to redeem.

In the gospel paradigm, parents are both *evangelists* and *disciple-makers*, continually retelling the story of creation, man's sin, Jesus' offer of redemption, and the promise of the Holy Spirit in guiding their children toward their God-given purpose.

Titus 2:11-12 ESV –

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,
12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,

How do we do this? One answer is to constantly have these conversations in our homes. Ask your kids, What is our mission on this earth? Why are we here? Is our goal to look good or to love others into the kingdom?

- Our children are just like us. They need to be reminded of their own desperate need for the gospel all the time; they need to be reminded that the world needs the gospel too, all the time.
- Family values—what is important to Mom & Dad? Family sayings... unspoken values... what is praiseworthy.

Two common misconceptions

1. **Denial**—saying that children are unaffected by early childhood experiences
2. **Determinism**—assuming children are simply the product of shaping influences

When Christ is the foundation for your parenting, it enables you to equip your children to navigate even the most complex issues in the culture today.

Focus on building a gospel-centered paradigm in your household as opposed to reverse-engineering Bible verses to fit into a worldview you desire to pass along to your children.

Teaching #3: Age-appropriate Goals and Objectives

(Note: much of this content was borrowed from Tedd Tripp's *Shepherding a Child's Heart*)

Children Ages 0-5: Learning Authority

1. Overarching goal for the first five years: help your children be people under authority – training children to obey father and mother

In the first five years the primary objective is to teach your children to be people under authority.

God – who is good, kind and gracious and has created us for His own glory – has created us to be people that live in and under authority in every aspect of our lives.

Teaching your child that listening/obeying to Mom and Dad accomplishes:

1. They learn to live under authority
2. They learn that authority is a place of blessing

Starting at a tender age, the opportunity to model the love of Christ begins with the love that flows in a Christian home. When our children are in the early stages of life (ages 0-3), they love to be held and taught through our physical and emotional closeness with them. A secure and healthy attachment between parents and children helps to set the stage for developing a personal relationship with God. Eventually, children in this stage will begin to repeat modeled behaviors such as folding hands and bowing heads during prayers.

Allow children to learn through discovery and using Bible story books, pictures, and hands-on opportunities (coloring, etc.). Hearing the engaging stories of characters from the Bible ignites their curiosity and wonder. As children grow older, they spend increasing amounts of time with peers and less time with parents. This should motivate parents to take advantage of the unique opportunities and time they have with their children while they are young.

Key section of scripture – Ephesians 6:1-3

Children Ages 6-12: Character Development

The big issue during these middle years is character.

Parents of school age children are confronted with new challenges. The children are spending more time away from the direct supervision of mother or father. Since you cannot be with your child all the time, you must work on building on those early lessons of being under a person of authority.

Character development is the goal. Your child must know what to do in hundreds of situations that you cannot anticipate. He needs biblical wisdom. His conscience must be developed as the reasoning factor of the soul so that he will know what he ought to do even when you are not there.

Your child's character must be developed in several areas. You want your child to learn dependability, honesty, kindness, consideration, helpfulness, diligence, loyalty, humility, self-control, moral purity, and a host of other character qualities.

In the pre-teen years, children learn the most through the application of thoughts and ideas. In other words, "How does this work?" Therefore, focusing family devotion time on what a specific Bible story teaches us about life is helpful. Concrete examples and object lessons help anchor Biblical teachings and principles in their minds. For example, when reading the story of David and Goliath, go outside and measure against a tree how tall Goliath would have been. For the brave parent, try putting a sling together and let them learn how hard it is to throw a stone accurately.

[Key section of scripture – Proverbs 2](#)

[Children 13 and older: Shepherding](#)

Our older children are pondering the future and can benefit from teachings that show the relevance of Scripture to life today. Remember, children are moving toward independence and forming belief systems of their own during this time. When children are young, their parents' beliefs largely govern their lives. However, as children grow into teens, the beliefs and values that govern their lives will shift from their parents' beliefs to their own set of beliefs.

There is a lot of complexity in shepherding children through the teenager years – children are typically insecure, heavily influenced by a culture that is not well-aligned to the gospel, and many parents are tired and ready to disengage.

While many parents live in fear and dread of these years, the teenager stage is tailor made for shepherding opportunities. Instead of stricter rules and rejection/disengagement, our children need steady and gracious shepherding. There are many opportunities for parents to shepherd their children by entrusting them with service opportunities (both home and in church) to serve and minister together, as co-laborers in the gospel.

[Key section of scripture – Galatians 6](#)

- Restore in a spirit of meekness
- Keep watch on yourself – and be willing to admit mistakes
- Bear one another's burdens
- Be not weary in well-doing

Discussion questions and worksheet

Teaching #1: PERSONAL REFLECTION

- How is your relationship with God? Are you growing with Him?
- How is your relationship with your spouse? Is it modeling the type of relationship that reflects God's design?
- How is your relationship with your children? Would they say with confidence that they feel your love? Do they know you have clear expectations and standards for their behavior?
- Identify at least two action items as to how you could build a healthier relationship with your child.

Teaching #2: PERSONAL REFLECTION

- In what ways do you currently teach your child about their conscience? Can you give an example of a time when your child's conscience was demonstrated? What and how can you build this into your daily discipleship of your child?
- What are your strengths when it comes to communication? What are your spouse's strengths when it comes to communication? Your child's?
- In what ways could your communication improve? What changes could you make that would help you communicate better with others?
- How does the gospel influence the decision making in your home?
- What are the effects of performance-based love on our children?
 - How can we stop this and move toward unconditional love?

List character development goals from these passages:

Ex. 20:1-17 _____

Matt. 5:3-10 _____

Rom. 12:3-21 _____

Gal 5:22-23 _____

Col. 3:12-14 _____

2 Pet. 1:5-7 _____

Eph. 4:32 _____

Phil. 2:3-4 _____

James 3:17-19 _____

Appendix 1: Some Ideas for Family Discipleship

Scripture Memory: Promoting and facilitating scripture memory for children to hide the Word in their heart (**Psalm 119:11**) is another powerful opportunity for children to grow as disciples. Parents should learn the verse right along with the children. Don't give in to the misbelief that young people can't memorize!

Reading the Bible: Remember that one of the goals of making a disciple is connecting the truths in Biblical stories to the relevance and application in everyday life (**2 Timothy 3:16**). Not only should children be taught to believe that the stories in the Bible are true, they should also be taught to develop the faith and trust that the same God who helped Noah is the same one who helps them. Having specific lessons or conversations with children about the characters of the Bible is a great way to teach about His ability and power.

Personal Testimonies: Parents have great opportunities to teach their children by taking the time to have conversations with them about how God has worked in the parents' lives. Parents also get to help guide children's eyes to see how God has helped or provided for the family. If parents are not purposely seeking these opportunities, they can quickly become overtaken by the cares of this life (**Mark 4:19**) and will sadly miss these teaching times.

Focused Attention: Making time to play with and listen to each child strengthens his ability to trust in the parent's teaching. One-on-one time with a parent is very special to children. Being engaged with children and their lives gives a parent the credibility to speak truth into their lives.

Family Time: Group settings can be a great way for children to learn to love God and to do His will. By learning to grow and enjoy the rewards of family fellowship, they are much better prepared for the joy of worship in a church fellowship. Start small and early! Build on the families' experiences to establish a stable foundation of family discipleship. The dinner table is one of the most powerful tools in this setting. Family vacations (short or long) are another valuable opportunity to build family time.

Adjust Your Expectations for Young Children: With very young children, a formal devotional time can often be hectic or chaotic. However, even a short Bible story and singing some Sunday School songs will help set important precedents in the home and teach the child about family values.

Family Devotions: Having a regular time of family devotions is a powerful blessing to a family. Of course, the format for this will greatly depend on the needs, ages, and schedules of the family. That said, taking time to read, discern, pray, and reason together regarding the Word will do wonders for family relationships. For example, integrating wisdom from the Proverbs and other applications from the Word are good opportunities to strengthen and sharpen disciples through family devotions. Using characters from Bible stories, doing word studies, and identifying how current events may fit with prophecy are all devotion opportunities. Allowing children some input into what is talked about and who gets to help with the lesson can also build participation and maintain interest.

Appendix 2: “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				