



PARENTING WORKSHOP

Family Camp 2022

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 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.

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.

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 6:1-3 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."

- 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.

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.

Conscience

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

"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

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

1. 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.
2. We want our children's conscience to be alive, aware and acute to God's Word as the standard of right and wrong.
3. 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.

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!

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 spirit-inspired leadership.

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**)

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.

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

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*.

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.

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.

Communication

Colossians 3:21

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

- it is imperative that we **encourage** them and **advocate** for them as their biggest supporters.

Some other points to consider:

- Ask God for help on communicating for *undertanding*
- 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.

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

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*
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?

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.

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.

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.

Model the Gospel

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.
- What do we mean by "everyday gospel"?

Discussion questions for further reflection

- 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. What specific actions can you take during this season of life you are in to prepare/help with parenting?
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?

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.