



Biblical Parenting I: Principles and Goals

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Overview of Series

1. Principles and Goals of Biblical Parenting
2. Methods for Parenting Small Children (2 weeks)
3. Methods for Parenting Middle Childhood (2 weeks)
4. Methods for Parenting Teenagers (2 weeks)
5. Resources:
 - a. The Bible
 - b. Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart* (Shepherd Press, 1995)
 - c. Paul Tripp, *Age of Opportunity* (P&R, 2001)



Principles & Goals in Parenting

1. Two Key Principles

- a. Parental Authority
- b. Getting to the Heart

2. Three Main Goals

- a. Obedience (primary focus in infancy-childhood)
- b. Character (primary focus in middle childhood)
- c. Internalized Faith (primary focus in adolescence)



Key Principle #1: Parental Authority

- Why Parental Authority?
 - God calls us all to live under authority.
 - Children need the authority of their parents.
 - Parental authority is God's provision and calling:
 - “Children obey your parents in the Lord, *for this is right*” (Eph. 6:1).
 - “Children, obey your parents in everything, *for this pleases the Lord*” (Col. 3:20).
 - “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” (Gen. 18:19).
 - “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.” (Ex. 20:12).
 - Parents are responsible to God for exercising authority
 - “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6).



Key Principle #1: Parental Authority

- What is Parental Authority?
 - Parents are not only to care for children, but *to govern and rule* them.
 - Authority means more than giving advice, but includes *making and enforcing decisions*.
- Defending Parental Authority:
 - Authority does *not* mean abuse; authority and anger do *not* belong together.
 - “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” *Ephesians 6:4*
 - Authority is not opposed to love or to humility.



Key Principle #2: Getting to the Heart

- The heart determines behavior.
 - “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life” (Prov. 4:23).
 - “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” (Lk. 6:45).
- What do we mean by “heart”?
 - Thoughts
 - Desires
 - Values
 - Identity
 - Will

“What your children say and do is a reflection of what is in their hearts... Parents often get sidetracked with behavior... You believe you have corrected when you have changed unacceptable behavior to behavior that you sanction and appreciate... The problem is this: Your child’s needs are far more profound than his aberrant behavior... If you are to really help him, you must be concerned with the attitudes of heart that drive his behavior.” T. Tripp, 4.



Key Principle #2: Getting to the Heart

- Shaping Influences on the Child's Heart
 - *Family Structure*: How many parents? Birth order. Grandparents?
 - *Family Values*: What is important? What causes stress?
 - *Family Roles*: Mother devoted to home? Father involved? Children's roles?
 - *Family Conflict Resolution*: Communication? Anger? Avoidance?
 - *Family Response to Problems/Failure*: mocked, avoided, nurtured, feared?
 - *Family History*: Influence of divorce, mental health, relocations, job loss...
- Shaping Influences *influence*, but do not *determine* the heart.
- Parents must not only provide the best possible environment, but must disciple (shepherd) the hearts of their children.

"You make a grave mistake if you conclude that childrearing is nothing more than providing the best possible shaping influences for your children... Your son or daughter responds according to the Godward focus of his or her life." T. Tripp, 15-16.



Main Goals for Biblical Parenting

1. Obedience (Primary focus in infancy-childhood)

- “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right” (Eph. 6:1).
- “Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution” (1 Pet. 2:13).
- “Do everything without complaining or arguing” (Phil. 2:14).

2. Character (Primary focus in middle childhood)

- “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age” (Tit. 2:11-12).
- “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law” (Gal. 5:22-23).
- “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled” (Mt. 5:6).

3. Internalized Faith (Primary focus in adolescence)

- “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31).
- “No one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart, by the Spirit” (Rom. 2:28-29).
- “My son, give me your heart and let your eyes keep to my ways” (Prov. 23:26).