

Class #11: Parenting & Child Development

Sunday, March 24, 2019 | Geoffrey R. Kirkland

"Faithfulness, not perfection, is rewarded by the Lord. That's because we can no more live a sinless life than we can make our children do the same thing. Only our Lord Jesus is he "who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21). He never sinned, but we do, and he knew we would need his help and encouragement to raise our children faithfully as he desires."

(Martha Peace & Stuart Scott)

"When you think your job is to change your child and you've been given the power to do it, your parenting will tend to be demanding, aggressive, threatening, and focused on rules and punishments. In this kind of parenting you are working to make your children into something rather than working to help them to see something and seek something. In this form of parenting, it is all about you and your children, rather than you being an agent of what only God can do in your children. Your hope is that you will exercise the right power, at the right time, and in the right way so change in your children will result. That process is profoundly different than working to be a useful tool in the hands of a God of glorious transforming grace, who alone is your hope and the hope of your children." (Paul Tripp)

"It requires of stewards that one be found FAITHFUL" (1 Corinthians 4:2).

Introduction

A Case Study:

- Christina WOULD NOT do her homework. Her teacher called Christina's parents to solicit help. But her parents could not help. 12-year old Christina would NOT obey them. Christina was NOT submitting to their authority. They had hoped that school would provide the direction and motivation that they had not been able to provide for their daughter.
- THIS STORY is not unusual.
- By age 10-12, scores and scores of children have already left/departed from home. Not physically, but the many numbers of children who have effectively departed from dad and mom as an authority or reference point for their lives.

OUR CULTURE has lost its way with respect to parenting. We are a rudderless ship without a compass. We lack (1) direction and (2) capacity to direct ourselves (Tedd Tripp).

Sadly, parents spend minimal time with their children.

Many families have thrown off the idea of Dad being authority and leader in the home.

Children now don't sit in neat rows in school. They don't ask permission to speak. They don't fear consequences of talking back to parents. They don't submit and obey. Rebellion against authority seems commonplace nowadays -- with no fear of consequences whatsoever.

In reality, we know in all of eternity there has only been *One perfectly faithful parent*, and He had the only perfectly faithful Son.

Of course we're talking about God the Father and God the Son. They loved each other perfectly and never sinned. The Father was *always* pleased with the Son. And the Son *always* carried out the will of the Father. Neither one would ever sin because they are holy. What a beautiful picture! (Stuart Scott and Martha Peace).

The gospel is our pattern and God as our Father is our example.

We have great hope not only in God's provision of daily grace to help us, but also from the help that is in God's Word. The Bible "was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Rom 15.4).

So mark it: "The Bible *does* tell us what we need to know and God will give us supernatural help to be *faithful to His Word* (Stuart Scott & Martha Peace).

A few headings:

- 1. Authority** — we are all designed by God to live under authority. We are God's agent to direct our children for God's glory and their good. And as a parent, you must exercise authority over your child. And yet, at the same time, you know that you can't *make* your child submit to authority.
- 2. Shepherding** — the parent is the child's guide. You are to shepherd a child to assess himself rightly and discern his responses rightly. We must not only understand "WHAT" of their actions but the "WHY" of their actions (heart/motivation). You are to use the 'rod and the staff' to help wayward, wandering, lost, foolish, and naive children to honor God and obey Him.
- 3. Centrality of the Gospel** — the central focus of all parenting is always the gospel. You need to direct NOT ONLY the behavior of the kids but their attitudes in their hearts. Not just the WHAT of their sin but the WHY of their sin and the SOLUTION to their sin and the DANGER of their sin.
- 4. Internalization** — We know our children must personally embrace and wholeheartedly internalize the message of the gospel. We have the marvelous opportunity to help take the

gospel truth and download it constantly into their hearts. God has given you many days of opportunities and endless circumstances to bring the gospel to bear hoping and praying that your child will internalize the Truth of the gospel.

In this session, I'm calling you as parents to be...

- Proactive
- Intentional
- Diligent
- Persevering
- Prayerful

What is successful parenting?

“TO BE FAITHFUL TO GOD’S WORD BY HIS GRACE AND FOR HIS GLORY”

Different stages of parenting in development, growth and instruction...

- ❖ Stage 1 - Give me your **attention** (Discipline & training phase (approx age 1-5))
- ❖ Stage 2 - Give me your **mind/heart** (Catechism – instruction, teaching, let me teach you what to believe & why to believe it (approx age 6-11))
- ❖ Stage 3 - Give me your **hand** (Come! let me show you how to live out what I've taught you to believe) (approx age 12-18)

If you're *not* married or if you *don't* have children in the home (single or older), don't tune out, but heed these four exhortations...

1. Calling You to Prayer!
2. Seeking You for Accountability!
3. Entreating You for Encouragement!
4. Inviting You for Partnership!

This session will provide *5 Parenting Principles*.

And these principles will help as you counsel and guide others who seek to parent faithfully.

1. Go for the Heart!

Paul Tripp writes: “In parenting, we are not just dealing with our child’s *behaviors* but our child’s *CONDITION*.”

Our children don't just make foolish choices. they make foolish choices because they are *lost*. They don't just have trouble getting along with their siblings; they have trouble getting along with them because they're lost. Our children aren't just lazy; they're lazy because they're lost. Everything we deal with is a *result* of something deeper that must be in our understanding and focus.

And every child is born, hard-wired believing *Two Lies*:

(1) **autonomy** (I am independent and my own and my own authority);

(2) **self-sufficiency** (I have everything I need inside of myself to be what I want to be and do what I need to do; he does' need help and rescue and deliverance).

“As a parent you are never, ever dealing just with the words and actions of your children. You are always also dealing with the thing that controls their words and behavior: **THE HEART.**” (Paul Tripp)

****Go to the factory -- the heart**

Prov 3.1, 3; 4:4, 21, 23*

Prov 7:3

Prov 16:1; 20:5

Examples:

When a 2 and 3 year old frequently says: “I want...” or “I don't want...” or “No, I don't want this...”, that foolish heart in the child is living out of the immediacy of his lusts, cravings, expectations, hopes and fears. It's ultimately a question of authority. Will the child live under the authority of God and therefore the authority of his parents, or will he choose to live under his own authority — driven by his own wants, and passions (Tedd Tripp).

Or this Example:

It's Tuesday afternoon and mom is in the kitchen and she's nervous because in an hour a family of 6 is going to arrive for dinner and she's not even remotely ready to have them all over! She doesn't feel ready to have hospitality. Meanwhile, in the family room, in full sight of the mom are her 3 kids: ages 7, 9, and 11 and they are playing video games. Toys are scattered around the floors. The table is not set. Mom is busily working in the kitchen. She's frustrated, stressed and sad. And lots of cleaning could be done to prepare for the guests.

WHAT'S WRONG HERE?

Mom is nervous and discouraged. She is frustrated and stressed out. They kids don't care. She is hurt that the kids don't offer to help. They don't care.

Consider this: You wouldn't want such a person to be your friend.

They're unfeeling, insensitive, selfish, inconsiderate and uncaring.

*What God is graciously revealing in the hearts of the kids is not permissible.

We can't just focus on their *obedience* but also the *character* (wisdom, thoughtfulness).

No, they have NOT rebelled against a rule. They have not disobeyed a command. But what they're doing is wrong because it is *lack of character*. They are not doing what's right, good, loving, and kind. The wrong here is not a blatant sin, but it's result of the lack of character. There's a great need but they're choosing to do nothing about it.

2. Guard Your Tongue!

> Our speech must be seasoned with salt // always be with grace (Col 4.6)!

What we say

How we say it

When we say it

Why we say it

Prov 10:11 - the mouth of the righteous is a fountain of wisdom** (we want this / our goal) (v.31-32)

As a parent and as a *resident 'in-home-biblical-counselor'*, "isn't this what you want your counseling room to become--a fountain of life? What more apt description could there be for biblical counseling, from which flows the words of eternal life? No other sort of counseling can even begin to provide life -- let alone abundant life! That flows *only from the fountain of Scripture ministered in the power of the Spirit*" (Jay Adams).

Prov 15:2 - tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable (don't spout out folly)

Prov 15:1-2 - anger

Verse 2 puts an interesting perspective on *how* knowledge is presented. It adds that when he does speak knowledge, he does so in such a way as to exalt that knowledge -- ie., make it seem good to others who are thereby attracted to it. He draws others away from foolishness and toward wisdom by *how* he speaks. This is an important insight for counselors to inculcate in counselees. It is not only what one says that God considers important; He is concerned about how he says it (Jay Adams).

Pro 16:23-24

"It is no wonder why so many teens do not receive instruction from their parents. They are suffering under the cruelty of their parents' harsh words. Any instruction is lost to a wounded spirit and deepening alienation" (Tedd Tripp).

Prov 17:9

This "repeating of sin" refers only to the *unnecessary* disclosure of the facts of another's sin. Every malicious or careless, as well as unnecessary, revelation of

another's misbehavior (or sin) is strictly forbidden. It is gossip, at best; it may be slanderous. (Jay Adams)

Pro 18:13

Prov 21:23

**Our goal for our children: Prov 23:15-16, 23

3. Mind the Moment!

> at the right moment/instance >> the right thing in the right way in the right time

Eph 4:29 principle: “*according to the need of the moment...*”

Eph 5:16 principle: “*making the most of your time...*”

Prov 15:23

Prov 12:25

Prov 25:11

You have no biblical obligation to censure your children for everything they do that is irritating you. You must increasingly make room for your child's/teen's differing style and manner, holding correction for moral and ethical failures. When you have determined that you must address some issue with your children, you must watch *for a good time*. If you have an important issue to discuss, it helps to take a walk or jog, or a ride in the car to provide some uninterrupted time for a good conversation. Develop sensitivity to your children... During the times when they are accessible, you must be prepared to engage them. It may be inconvenient for you, but it is critical to your relationship with them” (Tedd Tripp).

The right moment in our *speech*.

The right moment in our *correction/reproving*.

The right moment in our *discipline*.

Example with a young child:

Consider a scenario regarding a child in need of a spanking. Mind the moment: when you have given a direction that the child has heard and is within his capacity to understand, and yet he has not obeyed without challenge, without excuse or without delay, he needs a spanking. If you fail to spank you fail to take God's word seriously. You're saying that you don't believe what the

Bible teaches about these important issues. You're saying that you do not love your child enough to do the painful things that God has called you to" (Tedd Trip)

So if your child has not obeyed, he needs to be spanked.

As the child develops and ages, you probe the heart more and more to draw out the motives and reasons behind the behavior.

But remember: "Like apples of gold in settings of silver, is a word spoken in right circumstances (Prov 25:11).

4. Maintain Sound Theology!

IMPORTANT: Don't let emotions rule; live by what you *know* to be true/right/correct.

Follow the Truth of the Word.

Prov 19:3

Prov 11:3; Prov 10:23

Prov 11:20 (cf. Prov 15:9)

Prov 24:21-22 - urgent warning/instruction before disaster comes

Bear in mind a proper theology of God, anthropology, hamartiology, soteriology.

Remember the three pronged tool of diagnoses in parenting!

1. child in relationship to *GOD*
2. child in relationship to *HIMSELF*
3. child in relationship to *OTHERS*

"Successful parenting is not about achieving goals (that you have no power to produce) but about being a usable and faithful tool in the hands of the One who alone is able to produce good things in your children." (Paul Tripp)

Another example:

- Your 4 year old son hits his 2 year old sister. You say to your son who just punched his sister: "Why in the world would you do such a thing?" Now, You want him to say: "I hit her because of the sin in my heart. It makes me selfish, jealous, violent and I am person who needs to be rescued from myself, my desires, and from my sin. The greatest danger lives IN me and not OUTSIDE of me and for that I need a Savior!"

- But in reality, he's hit her 100 times before and you've had this conversation numerous times.

- Instead the kid really answers: “She just keeps taking my toys. I tell her not to but she just won’t listen. Why don’t you yell at her for *NOT* listening and for taking my toys without asking. At this point: you’re discouraged and you feel yourself losing it.

Or this example:

- Or the 18 year old teenager whom you have told to be in by 12midnight but yet he is late (AGAIN!). And the door finally bursts open about 12.30 and your teen says that he doesn’t like curfews. He’s late frequently. You are discouraged because it’s happened again and again.
- Now, think of your theology. The gospel provides the ultimate model of what God has called us to do as parents. We are in God’s family as his children but we are not complete because there’s massive change that still needs to take place. The *POWER* of sin is broken, but the *PRESENCE* of sin still remains and it will be **progressively** removed.
 - The key word is ‘PROGRESSIVELY’.
- Transformation is a lifelong process. Parenting is often not a series of life-threatening confrontation-confession events, but a lifelong process of incremental awareness of progressive change.

Praise the LORD--our kind “Father” provides the example for us — patience, self control, gentleness, love, faithfulness and joy.

Exercising control over your children so that you deliver many good things, and in so doing shape their behavior, is *not enough*. God has called you to more. God calls you to do more than just battle for control. He calls you to remind yourself and your children that the greatest danger in life lives *inside* of you not outside of you... So parenting is about being used of God to bring your children to the wholesome and heart-changing place of *personal helplessness*. This is not a process of condemnation, but of patient and loving rescue.” (Paul Tripp)

5. Rely on God!

“So your hope as a parent is NOT found in your power, your wisdom, your character, your experience, or your success, but in this one thing alone: the presence of Your Lord. The Creator, Savior, Almighty, Sovereign King is with you...

And God will expose your weaknesses so that you will run to Him, find His help in your time of need, and grow in your street-level confidence in His presence, power, and provision...

God does not call you to produce what you *cannot* produce. No, he simply calls you to be faithful, to do good toward your children day after day, knowing that the results are in His infinitely powerful hands.” (Paul Tripp)

Consider this scenario:

- There was once a Dad who angrily corrected his 10-year old son in a bout of great frustration — in front of others and the boy was forced to obey his father.
- While he obeyed, the terrible expression on his face disclosed his anger and deep hostility toward his dad. What kept him from open rebellion and rage? Simply this: The 10-year old boy was too young and still too intimidated by his dad to dare express the anger he felt. It showed only in his scowl.
 - But, years later, the boy *did* grow older and he *did* rebel. He did confide in evil companions. He did get into bad YouTube videos and worldly music that filled his heart and mind with foul language. But the seeds of rebellion were not sown by rebellious friends and bad music. The defiant ideas did not begin with the worldly media entering his brain. The rebellion of his heart was an expression of the many times he suffered the indignities of public reproof. And this internal festering and internalized and broiling *anger* grew and grew over the years.

3 amazing goals for parents to rely on God from Prov 1:7-19:

1. Fear of the LORD (7)
2. Adherence to parental instruction (8-9)
3. Disassociation from the wicked (10-19)

Never underestimate the *need for* and *supernatural nature* of the **NEW BIRTH**. Your child's greatest need is NOT new behavior but a *NEW BIRTH*. Not just new habits; but a new heart!

However good or bad or in control or out of control you feel, TRUST and RELY fully on God.

Prov 3:5-6

Prov 14:26-27

Prov 16:20

Prov 19:23 (rests satisfied)

Prov 28:14

Prov 29:25 - don't fear man, but trust in the Lord

Prov 18:10 - RUN TO THE LORD

Conclusion

Prov 12:22 - those who act faithfully are God's delight

Faithful to their duty

Faithful to their children

Faithful to their spouse

Faithful trusting the LORD

