

Parenting with Joy

Back to the Basics – Examining Parenting Assumptions, Part 2
Grace Fellowship Church, Pastor Brad Bigney, May 29, 2011

I. Parenting Should Be Intentional - and Comes with God-given Authority

Ephesians 6:1–4 “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² ‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise: ³ ‘that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.’ ⁴ And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”

God commands YOU parents to ‘bring them up.’ Not just watch them grow up.

Psalms 139:13–16 “For you have formed my inward parts; You have covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made... My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret... Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed...”

We are created BY God, in the image of God, for His glory.

Apart from absolutely loving and enjoying your cute little infant or toddler, your #1 objective in those early years should be to teach them how to be a person UNDER AUTHORITY. And we're not talking about being a tyrant or a dictator. We're talking about being their first encounter with a loving, gracious, courageous authority in their life – because it's what God's called you to be and do.

"The purpose of your authority in the lives of your children is not to hold them under your power, but to empower them to be self-controlled people living freely under the authority of God... I'm convinced parents don't have their authority taken away from them; they give it away." *Shepherding A Child's Heart*, p. 13-14, Tedd Tripp

Proverbs 13:15b "... the way of the transgressor is hard."

II. Being Afraid of Legalism Shouldn't Make Obedience Optional

I Samuel 15:22-23 "... Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice... for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry."

Ephesians 6:1 "Children obey your parents in the Lord..."

If you DON'T hold God's standard and God's law before them they'll never see their need for a Savior. They'll never find Christ attractive, and they'll never develop a personal sense of being a sinner in desperate need of a Savior.

Romans 7:7-9, 13 ⁷ "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet.'⁸ But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead.⁹ I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died...¹³ Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful."

It's a breakthrough moment for every one of us as human beings when our own, personal sin becomes exceedingly sinful, and we realize, 'Oh, my! I'M a sinner. Not just other people out there somewhere. ME.'

“No parents have the luxury of teaching their child nothing while they wait for his regeneration. If we are not requiring obedience, we are confirming defiance. If we are not inculcating manners, we are training in boorishness. If we are not developing the disciplines of prayer and Bible-listening, we are solidifying the sense that prayerlessness and Biblelessness are normal. Inculcated good habits may later become formalistic legalism. Inculcated insolence, rudeness, and irreligion will likely become worldly decadence. But by God's grace, and saturated with prayer, good habits may be filled with the life of the Spirit by faith. But the patterns of insolence and rudeness and irreligion will be hard to undo.”
“Why Require Unregenerate Children to Act Like They're Good?” John Piper, December 10, 2009

III. Regeneration is Essential – Remembering as Parent You Have Great Influence But Absolutely No Power to Change a Heart

“Just because I have many weaknesses doesn't necessarily mean my kids will suffer. I realized a truth that had lain hidden for so long. Though I had wonderful, godly parents, I still grew up with certain disappointments that I wanted to rectify as a parent. It finally dawned on me that I had asked something of my parents that they could never be: I had wanted them to love me as only God can love me. And now I wanted to love my kids as only God can love them...
I realized God had called me to focus my efforts on introducing my kids to God, even using my own failures and inadequacies as compelling causes for my children to find their refuge in Him. What

will it be for you? Will you try to compete with God, or will you work to introduce your children to the one true God?" *Sacred Parenting*, Gary L. Thomas, p. 44

Even in your failures you can point them to the Gospel, and cry out for the grace of God that alone can save them.

"The change of heart that comes with new birth solves many lesser parenting problems. But every parent faces a dilemma. We cannot give our children new birth. Children cannot take it. They cannot purchase it. We cannot earn it... every parent is profoundly dependent on God to finish the parenting process by giving each child new birth." *Gospel-Powered Parenting: How the Gospel Shapes and Transforms Parenting*, by William P. Farley, pgs 53-54

John 1:12-13 "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

"You know, the Lord has to pour out just as much grace to save a child from a believing family as He does to save one from a more worldly environment! We parents need to embrace this humbling (yet liberating) truth: We are not in control of our children's destiny. We are powerless to create faith in our children's hearts. While we can encourage our children to hunger for Wisdom's Feast, we cannot make that choice for them. Only the sovereign Lord can change our children's hearts..." *When Good Kids Make Bad Choices*, Elyse Fitzpatrick and Jim Newheiser, P. 28

Hope and pray parents! But don't try to BE or DO what only God can be and do for your child.