

Parenting with Joy

Staying Faithful ~ Persevering Regardless of the Results

Grace Fellowship Church, Pastor Brad Bigney, June 12, 2011

#1 – Keep Trusting God

- He's good (Ps. 119:68).
- He's perfect in all his ways (Ps. 18:30).
- He has not failed you, and He's not indifferent to your pain (Isa. 63:9).
- He's faithful (Ps. 145:13).
- He's all-wise and all-knowing (Ps. 139:1-24).

Hebrews 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

"Boys take a lot of faith... Unbelief is always anchored to the present, while faith looks at that which is unseen... the faith exhibited by wise parents of boys is the faith of a farmer, or a sculptor, or anyone else engaged in the work of shaping unfolding possibilities. It is not the faith of someone waiting around for lightning to strike; it is the faith of someone who looks at the present and sees what it will become – through grace... Unbelief cannot look past the surface. If there was any sin involved, unbelief sees only the sin... So faith is central in bringing up boys, but it is important to remember that the object of faith is not the boy. It is faith in God, faith in His promises, faith in His wisdom... Parents are to believe God for their sons, which is a very different thing than believing their sons." **Future Men**, Douglas Wilson, p. 9-11

It takes faith to raise kids! You have to be willing to look past the present and to put your hope and trust in the God of the future - that sees the beginning from the end.

#2 – Be Careful Where You Park Your Joy

"Although Joanna was just as faithful in her personal devotions and public worship, God was no longer at the center of who she was. All it took was Jimmy to mess it all up. With all his inner turmoil, Jimmy didn't make a very good trophy. Being with him often meant unexpected confrontations and public embarrassment. The girls were forced to live in the wings of Jimmy's drama and they didn't turn out to be trophy children either. Now that they were adults, Joanna was lost... She was paralyzed by what had happened to them, not just because she loved them so much, but more importantly because of what their struggle took away from her. In their tumultuous launch into adulthood, the kids not only broke Joanna's heart, but they also robbed her of her identity. She felt like it had all been for naught. When she looked in the mirror, she felt like she didn't know the person she saw there." **Lost in the Middle**, Paul David Tripp, p. 275-276

Psalm 35:9 “And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD; it shall rejoice in His salvation. All my bones shall say, ‘LORD, who is like You...’”

Psalm 43:3-4 “Oh, send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead me; let them bring me to Your holy hill and to Your tabernacle. Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy...”

No matter what is going on around you, and in the lives of your kids, you can have joy in who Christ is, what He's done for you, and how He's God to you, and how His love is better than any other love – including the love of your children.

I Peter 1:3-8

“The built-in problem with putting our trust in people, especially in our children, is that they’ll let us down. People were never meant to be our primary source of joy. They are a source of happiness to be sure, but they aren’t to be the mediators of our gladness. Jesus Christ is to be our source – not our spouse or our children or anyone else.” P. 38, **When Good Kids Make Bad Choices**, Jim Newheiser and Elyse Fitzpatrick

#3 – Stay Focused on the Right Thing (Loving God and Loving Others)

Matthew 14:30 “But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, ‘Lord, save me!’”

Pray for God to keep your focus and perspective clear, and to set your affections and hopes on Jesus where they belong.

Philippians 1:21 “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

#4 – Fight Bitterness! Not God!

Ephesians 4:31-32 “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

Hebrews 12:15 “Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.”

Watch your heart carefully for the earliest signs of bitterness.

- Am I withdrawing my love and commitment to my child or God?
- Am I shocked and appalled that my child would sin against me this?
- Do I wonder how God could allow this to happen to me?
- Do I think I deserve to be treated better by God?
- Do I find myself avoiding my child?
- Do I find myself avoiding my God?
- Do I see my child’s sin as the “log” and mine as the “speck” before God?

Make glorifying God your focus instead of dwelling on how you're being treated by your child.

#5 – Work Hard Not to Personalize Every Parenting Pain

It's not all about you! It's about what God is doing in you through the challenge of parenting.

Romans 5:8 “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

#6 – Don't Pull Away from Other Believers

Godly older men and women, especially ones who have weathered storms, can be a wealth of wisdom for you. Utilize your family of God.

Galatians 6:2 "bear one another's burdens."

Proverbs 18:1 “Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment.”

#7 – Deal with One Thing at a Time

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

#8 – Avoid Like the Plague the Comparison Trap

2 Corinthians 10:12 “Not that we dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who are commending themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding.”