

Biblical Role of Parents

Warm-up

A. Good parenting starts with *good parents*

B. Parenting: *guide your child to leave you well* (Gen. 2:24; Prov. 22:6)

I. Basic Scriptural Principles for both Parents

A. Parents are placed in the position of *authority* by God

1. Ex. 20:12: *Honor thy father and mother*

2. Gen. 18:19: *For I know him [Abraham], that he will **command** his children and his household after him.*

B. The character of authority is best described as God-like

1. John 13:3: *Jesus knowing that the Father hath given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God and went to God*

2. Children generally do not resist such God-like authority though all children will resist obedience because of our sinful natures

C. The manner and focus of the *shepherd the heart*

1. Eph. 6:4: *And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

- a. feeding anger is self-destructive

- b. nurturing and teaching the heart is empowering
 - nurture defined

- admonition defined

- c. Prov 22:6 *Train up a child in **the way** he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

D. The goal of shepherding is to lead the child to the cross

Group Discussion questions

1. Read Rom. 1:18-25 and discuss *how* this passage should guide us in understanding our children's heart.

2. How are we to shepherd the children's hearts in the following cases?
 - a. Peter and Johnny are playing and a fight breaks out over a particular toy. Peter maintains he had it first.

 - b. Maria talks back disrespectfully to you as a parent when correcting her for breaking a "house rule" like making her bed after she gets up.

 - c. You bought some new tennis shoes for your ten-year-old. When you bought them, you knew he would not be really happy but they were the only ones you could afford. Now when he is putting them on, he is crying. How are we to handle this?

 - d. After school, your child's teacher calls to inform you that Betty showed great disrespect to her teacher in making a derogatory comment about his clothing.

 - e. George comes home in tears and fears after having failed his math test even though he worked hard.

 - f. After cleaning your daughter's bedroom you find a very sensual romance tucked under her bed.

3. Which of these goals are Biblical goals in parenting?
 - a. Developing special skills to boost his self-esteem.
 - b. Raising our children into well-behaved and mannered children.
 - c. To help our children succeed in academic achievement.
 - d. Making them conscientious in personal and family devotions.

Take Home Questions for Parents to Discuss Together

1. Our children's life is intimately affected by various shaping influences of our family. The shaping influences are such things as the family values, family response to crisis or failure or conflicts, family cooperation among each other, and family history.
 - a. What have been some of the prominent shaping influences in your own childhood family setting that impact you as parents today?
 - b. Ask your children to identify what are the values of your family. What do they see matters most to us as parents?
 - c. How open is your communication with your children?
 - d. How do you resolve conflicts as a family?
 - e. List each child's strengths and weaknesses on paper and evaluate what you do as parents to shepherd each child in these individual needs.

2. Ask yourself how **each** child would answer this sentence, "What Dad and Mum want for me is ...". Would his/her answer be different when they would be asked, "What Dad wants from me...?" or "What Mum wants from me ...?"

3. Ask yourself as parents whether your children will one day respond to the question, "I know my parents loved me ..."
 - through the undivided attention they gave me
 - through their patient listening to my hurts and fears
 - through their example of faith, conviction, and prayerful walk
 - through their empathy and openness as we shared feelings
 - through their valuing my thoughts, opinions, and feelings
 - through their openness to touch, hug, and kiss
 - through their priority of God, His Word, and people
 - through their verbalized appreciation and love
 - through their example of joyous togetherness as family
 - a. Mark the responses of which you are *sure* they will give as answer!

 - b. Evaluate how you can *change* your family life so that all of these may be their response!

4. David Staal wrote a book with the title *Words Kids Need to Hear*. He argues persuasively that the messages we sent daily impact our children lifelong. The 'simplest' measures often have the most 'lasting' impact while the big things we did or gave, completely fade in our memories. He shaped his book around seven statements which we are to share with our children which will have a profound impact on their future lives. The seven statements are,
 - a. I believe in you!
 - b. You can count on me!
 - c. I treasure you!
 - d. I am sorry, please forgive me!

- e. Because (providing valid reasons for why we do what we do)¹
- f. No!
- g. I love you!

Discuss together how much you use these simple yet powerful words as you interact and parent your child(ren)?

5. Someone used the word BUSY as an acronym for
- B ... being
 - U ... under
 - S ... Satan's
 - Y ... yoke

How far is our family life become yoked in this way? What can be done to reduce this business and make more time for family time?

6. Someday ... when my children are old enough to understand the logic that motivates a parent, I will tell them ...

I loved you enough ...

- *to ask where you were going, with whom, and what time you would be home.*
- *to insist that you save your money and buy a bike for yourself even though we could afford to buy one for you.*
- *to make you pay for the bubble gum you had taken and tell the clerk, "I stole this yesterday and want to pay for it."*
- *to stand over you for two hours while you cleaned your room, a job that should have taken 15 minutes.*
- *to let you feel the consequences for your actions instead of covering up for you even though the penalties were harsh.*
- *to say No when I knew you would be angry to me for it.*

¹ For example, by adding *because ... (with reason)* to "I believe in you ..." your statement will impact even more. For example, "I believe in you" is not nearly so powerful as "I believe in you because your generosity shows me God has given you a big heart for other people." Or "You can count on me" is far weaker than "You can count on me because you know I will be always there to listen to you when you need me, and I will keep my eye on you." (Adapted from David Staal)

- *to make you do the chores like wash the dishes, make your bed, learn to cook, vacuum the floor, do laundry, empty the trash and all other sorts of jobs around the home.*
- *to insist you tell the truth at all times and punish you for when they caught you being deceitful.*

Can you add five more statements about how you *love(d) them enough?*

7. Discuss your specific parenting challenges/questions and pass them on. Will use them for organizing our small group follow-up discussions. Your struggle is most likely the one other parents have as well. This is an area where older parents hopefully can share their acquired wisdom and we can be stronger together.

