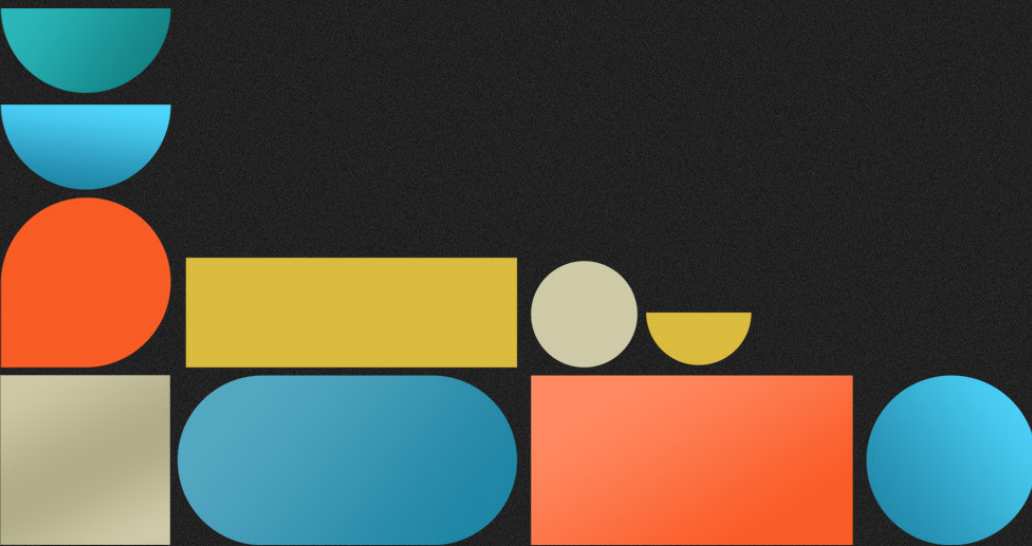




Parenting Is *Heart Work*



Parenting Is Heart Work



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Parenting Is Heart Work

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INTRODUCTION

It has been said that having a child is like having our hearts walking around outside our bodies. Our children can represent a plethora of dreams and emotions. They carry with them our joys and aspirations, as well as our sorrows and fears. All parents can attest that parenting is a daunting task in all aspects of our lives. It is hard work. It places us in a position where we have to give of ourselves sacrificially. We desire to be loving parents who will always take into account what's best for our children in every decision we make.

If we look at what the Bible says about parenting, it will carry even more weight. To make us understand the depth of His love for us, God used the relationship between parents and children. He is our Father. As His children, He takes good care of us. He showed us a sacrificial kind of love by sending His one and only Son to die on the cross for us. Therefore, parenthood is God's design and is meant to be a reflection of His love. We are given the huge responsibility of representing God's love to our children. We are called to love our children as God loves them. This means being patient, kind, and forgiving. It also means being willing to sacrifice for our children, and to put their needs above our own. There's no way we can do this on our own. We need God and the guidance He provides in His word.

⁴"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." **DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9**

God commands that we teach our children about Him and His ways, so that they may know and follow Him all the days of their lives. Proverbs 22:6 states that we are to *train up a child in the*

way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it. As Christians, our most important task as parents is to ensure that our children will grow up knowing God and His ways. This includes not only teaching them about God's word, but also modeling a godly lifestyle and teaching them how to pray and worship God.

Sometimes, we may feel that in order to train our children in God's ways, we need to "fix" them whenever something is off. We turn to what we think is the best method of discipline. We look at our children's behavior as a gauge to measure our effectiveness as parents. But parenting is not just hard work; it is heart work. Before we look at what we do or do not do as parents, we must first look at our hearts and understand why we are doing what we are doing.

We have to realize that as humans, we carry a sinful nature. Families nowadays can be very complex and far from God's original design. When we surrendered our lives to Christ, the process of transformation into Christlikeness started. But this process will take a lifetime. Therefore, no matter how much we love our children and how much we want to obey God's mandate to us as parents, we will fall short. The good news is that God is always at work to bring families together and back to His original design and purpose.

Parenting our children will be a journey with its own peaks and valleys. As we journey together with our children, we will experience the manifestation of our sinful nature and the restoration that God brings. As we continue to walk with God, He will expose both our hearts and our children's hearts in order to change us into the image of Christ. This material provides general truths and principles that would help us in discerning God's specific direction on how we should parent our children. May this material strengthen our confidence in God's power and grace to change our hearts, mold us to be more like Christ, and empower us as parents to fulfill our God-given task of raising our children in God's ways.

For the Victory Group Leader

For some people in your Victory group, discussing these topics may result in a conversation beyond your time together, professional counseling, or further ministry. Here are a few tips:

- Ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom and approach each topic in a sensitive manner, trusting God to reveal to you how to best minister to those in your Victory group. Prepare ahead of time and be open to how the Holy Spirit will direct the Victory group meeting.
- Listen without assumptions or judgment. Do not be dismissive when people open up and share their stories by saying things like, all you need is faith, just pray, and other people have it worse. Tread lightly on these topics, understanding that people may have misconceptions and hurts related to each topic.
- Speak the truth in love. Ask God for discernment and wisdom, trusting Him to transform us. Remember the process of change: truth, repentance, and faith. We are all in the process of sanctification, and spiritual health is a journey. We are after progress, not perfection. While we may not have all the answers, we do not expect immediate results and are committed to journeying together in discipleship.
- Ask for help from other Victory group leaders and your pastors, as needed. Consider and respect the privacy of the people in your group, and be discerning about disclosing private information.

Together, let us effectively minister the truth of God's word with love and compassion.

1 The Purpose of Parenting

WARM-UP

- What are the ages of your children? Share about a recent experience that describes their personalities.
- What kind of parent would you like to be?
- Who is the most admirable parent you know? Tell us about what makes him or her stand out.

WORD *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but **bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.***

EPHESIANS 6:4

Parenting is one of life's most rewarding and difficult experiences. Deciding how to best care for a child, especially with a variety of parenting styles being advocated, can be overwhelming. Despite these different approaches, the Bible is a timeless guide that reveals to us the God-given purposes of parenting and principles on how to raise our children. This week, we will look at what the Bible says about the purpose of parenting. Together, we desire to be guided by God's word as we fulfill our role as parents in a way that honors God and blesses our children.

1 Parents should teach their children to love, trust, and obey the Lord.

*Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but **bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*** **EPHESIANS 6:4**

*⁴"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children . . ." **DEUTERONOMY 6:4-7***

⁵He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, ⁶that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, ⁷so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments . . . **PSALM 78:5-7**

In the New Testament, there aren't many verses that speak specifically on parenting. But, one of the passages that does is Ephesians 6:4, where fathers are instructed to bring their children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. This means that parents are responsible for teaching their children about God and His ways. As parents, our primary role is to teach our children to love God and to put their faith in Him. The goal of parenting isn't merely to raise well-behaved kids or for them to know all the Bible stories. Rather, as the Psalmist wrote, our hope is that our children put their hope in God.

As much as we would want our children to have faith in Jesus, it's not something we can force upon them. It's a decision that our children will need to make on their own. But what we can do as parents is to give them every opportunity to know Jesus and learn to put their faith in Him. What are some ways we can do this today?

2 | Parents should provide for the physical needs of their children.

But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. **1 TIMOTHY 5:8**

A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children . . .
PROVERBS 13:22

In addition to teaching our children to love and trust in God, we should provide for their physical and material needs. This includes food, shelter, clothing, and anything else they require to live and thrive. Furthermore, the Bible exhorts parents to do everything possible to provide an inheritance for their children and even their grandchildren. This will serve as a springboard for children to fulfill their God-given purpose and advance His kingdom long after we, their parents, are gone. Do you believe that an inheritance is only physical and financial? What other legacy can you leave to future generations?

3 | Parents should train their children to prepare them for life.

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. **PROVERBS 22:6**

Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. **PSALM 127:4**

As parents, we are not simply to provide for our children's present needs; we are to prepare them for their future life.

We are to train them in a way that what they learn will be with them for life. Psalm 127:4 likens children to arrows. A warrior shapes and maintains the arrow before carefully and deliberately aiming it at its target. It is critical to prepare and aim the arrow because once released, the warrior loses control of it. Similarly, we recognize the limited time we have to directly influence, train, and lead our children in the right path. This includes teaching them not only practical skills and knowledge for the real world, but also how to rely on God, hear from Him, and live out His purpose for their lives. While many people believe that the goal is to transition children from dependence to independence, the goal should be to transition them from dependence on us as their parents to God as their Father. When children are dependent on God, they will be guided even when they are older. What are some important things you believe children should be prepared for?

God has a great purpose and future for our children, far better than anything we could hope for or imagine. So for the years that our children are under our care, we should take every opportunity to bring them to Jesus so that they will experience the blessed kind of life in Christ, for in Him we find hope, life, and purpose.

APPLICATION

- How have you been teaching your children to love the Lord and preparing them for life? What can you do to improve in these areas?
- Among the three purposes mentioned above, which do you believe you should give more attention to in the season of life?
- In what ways have you struggled as a parent in following God's purpose for parenting? How can you seek His guidance and wisdom in this area?

PRAYER

- Declare your commitment to God to faithfully lead your children to Him. Pray for God's grace and wisdom to be upon you as you do this.
- Pray for your children to grow in faith in Jesus, that they would pursue Him with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength.
- Pray for the wisdom and power to provide for your children their needs and to prepare them for life.

2 The Heart of Parenting

WARM-UP

- Think of something valuable that was entrusted to you. What did you do to make sure this valuable thing was well taken care of?
- Recall a time when you were given a task you looked forward to doing. What made you excited?
- What is the most challenging part of correcting a mistake someone made? How do you approach this?

WORD *1So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2shepherd **the flock of God** that is among you, **exercising oversight**, not under compulsion, but willingly, **as God would have you**; not for shameful gain, **but eagerly**; 3**not domineering** over those in your charge, but **being examples** to the flock. 4And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. **1 PETER 5:1-4***

Parents have the responsibility to care for the spiritual, emotional, and physical wellbeing of their children. The heart and attitude of a parent is just as important as the purpose of parenting and the methods we use. Parents should not only have the right purpose and do the right things—they also need to have the right heart.

The passage above directly applies to the kind of heart and attitude that church elders should have in leading the people of God. However, these principles also apply to parents, especially since the church is likened to a family (Ephesians 2:19). Paul, as an apostle, also likened his relationship with the church (1 Corinthians 4:14–15) as a father to his children. As parents, we function as the spiritual leaders at home. Our children are part of the flock that God has entrusted to our care. In this lesson we will

look at three attitudes of our hearts that God wants us to have as we shepherd our children.

1 | God calls us to have the heart of a steward.

... shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight . . . **1 PETER 5:2**

While our children may carry our family name, they belong to God. We are stewards *exercising oversight* over them. When we take this truth to heart, it will change how we view and treat our children. Since they ultimately belong to God, we cannot simply do as we please. We are to raise them according to God's word and be empowered by Him. When we have this mindset of our children belonging to God, we cannot treat this responsibility casually. We need to give our children deliberate care and attention. Just like how stewards are held accountable by the owner, we too, as parents, are accountable to God in shepherding the children that He entrusted to us. What do you think will happen if we expose our children to the world without proper guidance?

2 | God calls us to have willing and eager hearts.

. . . not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly . . . **1 PETER 5:2**

Parenting is a very difficult responsibility requiring plenty of time, effort, resources, and personal sacrifice. Challenges in parenting are real, especially in the digital and highly globalized world we live in. We see more and more couples who greatly delay and even forego being parents because they see this as a hindrance to their personal growth and career advancement. On the other hand, others see their children as a means to meet their personal needs and goals. However, as spiritual leaders of God's flock in our homes, we are to have willing and eager hearts in this great responsibility. Since this is God's will for us, we can trust that He will continually work in us and empower us to have such a heart. What brings you the most joy in raising your children? How can you carry this same joy in every aspect of parenting?

3 | God has called us to have gentle and genuine hearts.

. . . not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. **1 PETER 5:3**

As God's shepherds of our children, we are not to be domineering in our attitude towards our children. We are not to treat them harshly. This does not mean that we should not discipline them. However, when we do so, we are not to use our authority excessively just to get compliance. Rather, we are to show and guide our children to the truth. We are

to be genuine examples of what we are teaching them. As parents, we should be the first to sincerely pursue living out what we want to teach our children so that they could see our lives and follow our example. This does not mean that we need to be perfect first. But the love of God and the heart of genuinely following Him should be evident in our lives. Are your words and actions aligned to the kind of example you want to set for your children?

And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. 1 PETER 5:4

Aside from our love for God and our children as our motivation, Peter also points out another truth. When we take care of the flock that God has entrusted to us (our children), with the right attitude and heart, then when Jesus the Chief Shepherd appears, we will receive a reward from Him that will never fade.

APPLICATION

- What does stewarding your children look like in your home? What are some ways you can help them love God and be more impactful in their lives?
- Set aside time this week to reflect on the words you say and the actions you do toward your children. Ask God to help you discern how you can improve these.
- Children have different needs as they grow older. What do you think are some areas in your children's lives that need guidance from you? Think of practical ideas to answer these felt needs as you steward and raise your children.

PRAYER

- Praise God for the grace that abounds as we parent our children. Thank God for the privilege to shepherd His children, as He shepherds His flock.
- Ask God for forgiveness for the times when you've knowingly or unknowingly neglected your children. Pray that God would remind you every day to be a good steward and parent towards them.
- Pray that every word or action that comes from you would exemplify Christ's love to your children. Ask God to show you how to follow in His ways and not rely on your own abilities, especially in the area of parenting.

3 Receiving Grace to Parent

WARM-UP

- How have your activities and schedules changed from being single to becoming a parent? What were the turning points?
- What was the most memorable question your child asked you? How did you answer it?
- What are some traits or mannerisms that your child has picked up from you? Recall an instance explaining this.

WORD *¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹²training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.* **TITUS 2:11-14**

It's safe to say that most parents may feel inadequate in raising their children. Parenting is a difficult job—raising a child, especially in the ways of God, is a big responsibility. It is important to understand that this responsibility is bigger than us and beyond us. We therefore need to look to God—He who gave these children to us and also the one who has given us spiritual authority over our children.

Through Jesus Christ, we are recipients and heirs of His abounding grace before we are called to be the father or mother of our children. God's grace is His unmerited and unconditional favor and love towards the objects of His grace. It is multifaceted and finds many expressions in the lives of people. Today, we will look at some important ways God gives us grace as we parent our children.

1 | God's grace empowers us to be the parents He has called us to be.

¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹²training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. TITUS 2:11-14

¹²Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

PHILIPPIANS 2:12-13

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence. . . . 2 PETER 1:3

Parents need God's grace because parenting is one of the most challenging and rewarding roles in life. The responsibility of raising children can be overwhelming and demanding, requiring patience, love, and discipline.

We need to know what is the right thing to do, how to do it, have the strength to do it, and carry it out with the right heart and attitude. There are times when we need to deal with children who are being difficult. We may struggle with balancing work and family responsibilities. We need to make many difficult decisions, such as discipline, education, and finances. This can overwhelm us by the weight of our choices. We have to manage our own emotions and remain calm and patient in the face of frustration and stress. As parents, we have to deal with disappointment when our children don't meet our expectations or when they face setbacks.

The good news is that God has made His grace available to us so that we could be the parents He wants us to be. God works in us to have the right will, desires, and attitude to do what pleases Him, even with regards to parenting. His grace teaches and trains us to distinguish between right and wrong. His grace also empowers us to do what is right and turn away from what is evil. By His grace, His power has been made available to us to do all that pertains to love and godliness. And we experience this more and more through our knowledge of Him. The more we know God and experience His grace, the more we are transformed and empowered to be who He has called us to be and what He has called us to do.

How has God's grace shaped you to become more aligned to His ways even in parenting your children?

2 | **God's grace comforts and restores us whenever we fail.**

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. **ROMANS 8:1**

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **1 JOHN 1:9**

God's grace indeed empowers us to will and to act as parents according to what pleases Him. However, even with the best of intentions and efforts, we are still human and make mistakes. In these moments, we need God's grace for us to experience God's forgiveness, comfort, and restoration. When we fail, make mistakes, and even sin, we can experience His forgiveness and let go of our feelings of

condemnation as we confess to Him our sins and receive His forgiveness. His grace brings us comfort when we know that our failures and shortcomings do not define us. It is not the end but rather an opportunity for God to grow us into maturity. This allows us to parent with a renewed sense of purpose and joy, despite the challenges and failures we may face. How has God's grace given you assurance even in your shortcomings as a parent?

3

God's grace enables us to extend grace to our children.

*¹²Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; **as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.** **COLOSSIANS 3:12-13***

*¹⁰In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. . . . ¹⁶So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. . . . ¹⁹We love because he first loved us. **1 JOHN 4:10-11, 16, 19***

An intrinsic part of the nature and the process of growth of children is making mistakes. Our children have a lot of limitations and weaknesses. They also still are in the process of learning right from wrong. They are still in the process of discovering things and learning how to properly relate to other people and, most of all, to God. Therefore, it is

important that they are nurtured in an environment where they are extended grace. The good news is that experiencing God's grace and love also helps us become more gracious to others as well. As we reflect on, appreciate, and rely on God's love and grace towards us, He progressively works in us so that we too can be more gracious towards others, including our children. In what ways has your receiving of God's grace, love, and forgiveness affected how you treat your children?

APPLICATION

- In what specific areas in your life as a parent do you need God's grace? Ask God that you would trust in His grace instead of leaning on your own understanding and abilities.
- Recall any shortcoming you faced in parenting your children. After hearing today's encouragement, what are some practical things you can do moving forward?
- What are some ways you can help your children understand their mistakes? How can you do this in love and with the same grace God has given you?

PRAYER

- Thank God for His abundant grace as you raise your children. Thank God that despite the many challenges you face as a parent, He makes His strength and wisdom available.
- Ask God for forgiveness for the times when you've magnified your shortcomings as a parent instead of focusing on His grace that comforts, forgives, and restores.
- Pray that as you receive grace from God, He would continue to make you a channel of His grace to your children. Ask God to make your life a testimony of His grace so that your children may extend grace to others as well.

4 Teaching Grace to Our Children

WARM-UP

- Where do you usually go to spend time with your children? What makes that place special?
- When you were younger, what did you want to become when you grew up? What do your children want to be when they grow up?
- What is one lesson or life skill that you had to learn the hard way? What made it difficult and how did you respond?

WORD *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but **bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.***

EPHESIANS 6:4

Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. **COLOSSIANS 3:21**

Children can become resentful toward their parents for various reasons. These include lack of attention or affection, unfair treatment, unreasonable expectations, harsh or inconsistent discipline, and broken promises, among others. As parents, we are not to use our authority to cause our children to harbor feelings of resentment and bitterness. Rather, we are instructed to bring our children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Simply put, we are to make disciples of Jesus out of them. This means that we have a responsibility to teach our children about God and the gospel of His grace through the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not just the content of the instruction that is important but also the manner that we teach, discipline, and raise our children. The following are some of the aspects of God's grace that we are to teach and reflect to our children:

1

We are to teach and reflect God’s saving grace to our children.

⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast. **EPHESIANS 2:8-9**

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. **ROMANS 8:1**

Arguably the most important instruction about God that we are to impart to our children is His grace that saves us from our sins and gives us the gift of eternal life. God no longer condemns sinners who have put their trust in Jesus Christ’s saving work. This truth is the foundation of all the other aspects of God’s grace we are to teach our children in order for them to live the kind of lives God wants them to have.

As parents, we are also to reflect this truth in the way we treat our children. They need to see that our love and acceptance of them is not based on their performance. Children, by nature, because they are still learning, are prone to making mistakes. When they experience a forgiving, non-condemning environment, they will be more confident to learn and grow. What are other benefits in being reared in a grace-filled, non-condemning environment?

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2

We are to teach and reflect God's sanctifying grace to our children.

¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹²training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. TITUS 2:11-14

While maintaining a grace-filled and non-condemning environment, parents also need to teach their children right and wrong. While mistakes are made, children need to understand that there is such a thing as sin that hurts God's heart and displeases Him. Sin also hurts other people and the one who sins. The good news that we, as parents, can impart to our children is that God's grace does not just allow our sins to be forgiven, but it also gives us power to overcome sin and do what is right.

Our lives as parents should reflect this grace to our children. We do this by encouraging them—as they look to God and His saving grace, He will work in their hearts so that they will have godly desires and the ability to live according to His ways. We should also avoid giving negative labels to our children. Instead, we should remind them of their identity in Christ and encourage them that there is hope in Him to grow and be more Christlike. What are some examples of negative and positive labels parents place on their children? What do you think are the effects of these on them?

3

We are to teach and reflect God's empowering grace to our children.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. **EPHESIANS 2:10**

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence . . . **2 PETER 1:3**

Our children must also be taught that God not only enables them to live a life that overcomes sin, one that is holy and pleasing to Him. He also has a good purpose for their lives and He provides us with the enabling grace to accomplish that purpose.

As parents, we are to be a constant source of encouragement to our children in discovering God's purpose for their lives and spurring them on to put their trust in God even in the midst of hardships, obstacles, and disappointment. We are to remind them that God can enable them to surpass their limitations because He is an all-powerful God. He works for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purposes. He can empower them to get up again even when they fail and continue on to pursue His call for their lives. What are some ways that you encourage your children and help them accomplish their goals?

4

We are to teach and reflect God's accepting grace to our children.

⁵And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. ⁶**For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.**" ⁷It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. . . . ¹⁰For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, **but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.** ¹¹For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. **HEBREWS 12:5-8, 10-11**

There are many times that our children will receive corrections from us. At such times, our children may take our disapproval of their actions and our correction as a sign of our rejection of them. This could make them feel alienated, hurt, and dejected. However, we are to remind them that our discipline is not a sign of rejection. It is a sign that they belong and are accepted. After all, we do not discipline other people's children because they are not ours. Because our children belong to us and we are concerned about them, we discipline our own. While we may not accept or approve of their actions, they are accepted as beloved children in the family.

We are to teach them that this is a reflection of God's grace in accepting His children. It is an affirmation of us being His legitimate children. God allows us to go through troubles in life and we are to consider them as His way of disciplining us. His discipline is a sign of His acceptance of us, not His rejection. God does not discipline us as His children to get back at or punish us. Because He loves and accepts us, God disciplines us for our good so that we might become more

like Christ. Share a time that you were disciplined by your parents that was painful then but, now looking back, you are really thankful that they did it.

APPLICATION

- How have your children responded to hearing the gospel and seeing you live it out? What practices can you do as a family to foster a Christlike environment in your home?
- Are there any challenges that are weighing down your children as they pursue God's purpose for them? Speak a word of encouragement and assurance to them this week.
- After hearing today's lesson, what are some ways you can discipline your children without becoming too tolerant or overbearing?

PRAYER

- Thank God for His saving and sanctifying grace that restores and renews us even in our shortcomings. Thank Him that we can extend the same grace towards our children.
- Ask God to continue empowering you and your children to live for His purposes according to His grace. Pray that God's word would be the foundation your family can stand on.
- Pray for God's grace to discipline your children and for them to view it as an act of love. Pray that even the way you discipline your children would demonstrate the gospel to them.

5 Basic Principles in Training Children

WARM-UP

- Share an unforgettable time you had with your parents when you were young.
- What is one of the greatest lessons you learned from your parents? Why?
- What activity do you enjoy doing with your children? Why do you enjoy it so much?

WORD *⁴“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”*

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9

Oftentimes, as parents, we ask ourselves whether we are doing what is expected of us in our role as parents. We can be unsure if what we are teaching our kids is correct and if our children will be who God wants them to be. Such uncertainty can be addressed by understanding our primary responsibility as parents and what we are to teach our children first.

This passage shows that we are to teach our children to believe in and love God above everything else. Jesus also emphasized this as the most important command and the cornerstone of all others (Matthew 22:36–40). As we teach these to our children, they will experience and understand that a relationship with God is based on love—not on rules of dos and don'ts. They will know

more of God and how loving and faithful He is. They will then learn to rely on Him rather than on us as their parents or anyone else. As they grow in their knowledge of Him, they will grow in their love for and trust in God.

But how do we teach our kids to love God with all of their soul, mind, and strength, and to trust in Him more than anyone else? Here are three ways we can teach these to our children.

1 | **We are to teach our children by being an example to them.**

“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.” **DEUTERONOMY 6:6**

It can be said that the phrase “more is caught than taught” is true for children, as they learn from us. This means that they gain more insights from what we do and model rather than what we say. It is for this reason that if we want to teach our children about loving God, then we are to be good examples in this area. If we want to impart to them the love for God’s word, our kids need to see that we read and live out His word in our lives. If we want them to honor God and learn to trust God in their finances, we are to show our kids that we give generously. We are to show them that we love, prioritize, worship, honor, and trust God. These have to start with us so we can pass them on to our children. Have your recent actions been good examples to your children? What is their response to your actions?

2

We are to teach our children by diligently creating opportunities to instruct them.

“You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”

DEUTERONOMY 6:7

We are to be intentional about teaching our children to love God. Such things require careful consideration and planning, not just waiting for them to happen. As a matter of fact, we are encouraged to repeat these truths and drill them into the lives of our children until they know them by heart. Though teaching them could be structured in some way, it does not have to be rigid. What matters is that it becomes a way of life rather than just something they do on Sundays. Teaching can happen both formally and informally. We can have devotions over breakfast, sit-down or heart-to-heart sessions, or meaningful conversations before sleeping. We can also look for opportunities and teaching moments when we are shopping, falling in line to buy food, having their hair cut, or even when we are in traffic. Every moment is a learning opportunity for our children. What is your favorite pastime with your children? How can you use it to teach your children about God?

3

We are to teach our children by creating a home environment that would remind them of God.

⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” DEUTERONOMY 6:8-9

As parents, we are to make sure that our homes provide a loving and nurturing atmosphere for our children. Though learning can take place anywhere, it is inside our home where we have control on what our children are exposed to. If we want them to grow in their knowledge of God, our home must be filled with things that will build faith and remind them of God. Do they see the Bible at home? Do they hear worship songs being played every day? Are there books, memory verses, or even posters on our walls that would remind them of God and His love for them? Thus, the four corners of our homes provide not just the space that our children need, but also opportunities and lessons that point them to God and His faithfulness. Is your child a tactile learner, a visual learner, or an auditory learner? Knowing this, how can you help your child be reminded of God in your home?


We are given much time to spend with our children. We are to use such moments to teach our kids about loving God and trusting Him. No matter what season of life they are in or how old our children are, we are to raise and teach them to love God with all of their heart, soul, mind, and strength as they grow into the men and women that God has prepared for them to be.

APPLICATION

- In what aspect of teaching your children do you want to improve?
- How can you apply the truths we discussed this week in order to teach your children about loving God?
- What is one area you want your children to grow in?

PRAYER

- Thank God for the privilege of raising godly children and becoming a good example for your children to follow.
- Ask God to help you raise your children in His ways. Pray that your actions would model His character and your life would be a good example they will learn to follow.
- Pray and declare that your family would honor and follow God above all else. Ask God for practical ways your children can be reminded of His goodness and faithfulness every day.



⁴Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” **DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9**

All parents can attest that parenting is a daunting task. It is hard work. As parents, we are given the huge responsibility of representing God's love to our children. We are called to love our children as God loves them. This means being patient, kind, and forgiving. It also means being willing to sacrifice for our children, and to put their needs above our own. The goal of this material is not to provide simple answers to life's challenging situations in the home. As parents, we are to be first and foremost dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives—the heart work He is doing in us—and then dependent on God's grace for the heart work He is doing in our children's lives.

TOPICS

- The Purpose of Parenting
- The Heart of Parenting
- Receiving Grace to Parent
- Teaching Grace to Our Children
- Basic Principles in Training Children



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