

PARENTING BY THE BOOK

INABILITY

1. REVIEW: LAW

A. PRINCIPLE: OUR CHILDREN NEED GOD'S LAW, BUT WE CANNOT EXPECT THE LAW TO DO WHAT ONLY GRACE CAN ACCOMPLISH.

B. PLEASE CONSIDER LISTENING TO LAST WEEK'S LESSON ON THE CHURCH WEBSITE "hccfbg.org" ... page down to "RESOURCES" ... then page down to "PARENTING BY THE BOOK" ... choose "MARCH 12" for "OUTLINE" and "AUDIO".

2. QUESTION: HAS PARENTING EVER MADE YOU A LITTLE CRAZY?

A. DO YOU EVER QUESTION YOUR SANITY REGARDING PARENTING?

1. DEFINITION OF INSANITY..

a. "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results". – Albert Einstein

B. "IS IT POSSIBLE THAT YOUR PARENTING STYLE IS THE CAUSE OF YOUR CONSTERNATION AND NOT YOUR CHILDREN?"

C. HAVE YOU SOMEHOW ADOPTED THE SAME MODEL THAT HAS FAILED MANY CHRISTIAN PARENTS FOR THE LAST 70 YEARS?

1. POST MODERN PSYCHOLOGICAL PARENTING...

a. WITH IT'S RULES AND CONSEQUENCES TO ACHIEVE BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION?

b. AS OPPOSED TO HEART CHANGE.

D. GOOD NEWS... IF YOU ANSWERED "YES" TO ANY OF THOSE QUESTIONS...

1. YOU ARE IN THE RIGHT PLACE THIS MORNING!

3. INABILITY

A. PRINCIPLE: RECOGNIZING WHAT YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO DO IS ESSENTIAL TO GOOD PARENTING.

B. STORYTIME: FATHER IN WALMART

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1. HURLING THREATS AT HIS DAUGHTER
2. LOUD AND ANGRY VOICE
3. THREATNING AND REPEATING
4. SHAKING HER ARM
5. DAUGHTER QUIETLY CRYING
6. **DID HE LOVE HIS DAUGHTER?**
 - a. I THINK HE PROBABLY DID
7. **PROBLEM: THE WAY HE PARENTED HER WAS SHAPED BY BUYING INTO SOMETHING THAT JUST WILL NEVER WORK!**
 - a. THAT DAD WAS IN HIS DAUGHTER'S FACE WITH THREATENING AND REPEATING ANGER **BECAUSE HE ASSIGNED TO HIMSELF POWER THAT HE DOES NOT HAVE.**

C. I've heard parents **VERBALIZE** it.

1. "If it's the last thing **I do**, I'll get my children to believe."
2. "I **will** discipline the hell out of my children."
3. "It's **my job** to ensure that they do what is right."
4. "If I do nothing else, I **will** send children out into the world who are prepared to live right."
5. "After **I'm done** with him, he'll never even think of doing that again."
6. The **ASSESSMENT** in these statements that **CHILDREN NEED TO CHANGE** is **RIGHT**.
 - a. The deep **DESIRE FOR THAT CHANGE** which motivates a parent is **RIGHT**.
 - b. The **COMMITMENT** to work for that change is **RIGHT**.
7. Then **WHAT IS WRONG** with each of these statements?

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- D. **EACH OF THESE STATEMENTS ASSUMES POWER THAT NO PARENT HAS... AND THAT ASSUMPTION CREATES ALL KINDS OF PARENTING PROBLEMS.**
- E. **IF we are going to BE WHAT GOD DESIGNED US TO BE AS A PARENT and DO WHAT HE HAS CALLED US TO DO...**
1. **IT IS VITAL THAT WE BELIEVE AND ADMIT THAT WE HAVE NO POWER TO CHANGE OUR CHILD FOR THE LONG TERM.**
- F. **PARENTING is NOT about EXERCISING POWER FOR CHANGE IN OUR CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR.**
1. **PARENTING IS ABOUT OUR HUMBLE FAITHFULNESS IN BEING WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN GOD'S WORK OF HEART CHANGE FOR THE SAKE OF OUR CHILDREN.**
2. **GOD HAS GIVEN PARENTS AUTHORITY FOR THE WORK OF CHANGE...**
- a. **BUT... HE HAS NOT GRANTED US THE POWER TO MAKE THAT CHANGE HAPPEN!**
3. **PARENTS ARE "AGENTS OF CHANGE" ... WE ARE NOT "CHANGE AGENTS".**
- G. **BUT... we buy into the DELUSION of THINKING that THE POWER IS OURS.**
1. We **THINK THAT IF:**
- a. we speak just a little bit louder,
- b. or stand a little bit closer,
- c. or make the threat a little bit scarier,
- d. or the punishment a little more severe,
- e. **THEN OUR CHILDREN WILL CHANGE.**
2. And **BECAUSE the CHANGE DOES NOT HAPPEN, we tend to bring it on EVEN STRONGER...**

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- a. BECAUSE WE ARE **FRUSTRATED** by the **FACT** we **DO NOT POSSESS THE POWER WE BELIEVE WE HAVE**.
 - b. **TRUTH: WE ARE “AGENTS OF CHANGE”... WE ARE NOT “CHANGE AGENTS”**.
- H. In **PARENTING**, what we are dealing with is **MUCH DEEPER** than the **NEED** for **BEHAVIORAL CHANGE**.
1. What we **ARE ALWAYS DEALING WITH IS THE NEED FOR HEART CHANGE**...
 - a. **AND WE SIMPLY HAVE NO POWER TO CHANGE ANOTHER PERSONS HEART!**
- I. **HERE IS THE POINT:**
1. **IF AS A PARENT WE THINK THAT WE HAVE POWER THAT WE DO NOT HAVE...**
 - a. **WE WILL DO THINGS THAT WE SHOULD NOT DO...**
 - b. **AND WE WILL FAIL TO DO THINGS THAT WE SHOULD DO.**
 2. **When we THINK OUR JOB is to CHANGE OUR CHILD and that WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE POWER TO DO IT...**
 - a. **OUR PARENTING WILL TEND TO BE...**
 - 1) **DEMANDING**
 - 2) **AGGRESSIVE**
 - 3) **THREATENING**
 - 4) **AND FOCUSED ON RULES AND PUNISHMENTS.**
 3. In this **MODEL of PARENTING**, it is all about **US** and **OUR CHILDREN**,
 - a. **RATHER THAN ABOUT US BEING AN AGENT OF WHAT ONLY GOD CAN DO IN OUR CHILDREN... (**
 - b. **(“AGENT OF CHANGE” –VS- “CHANGE AGENT”)**

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4. OUR JOB IS SIMPLE... IT IS NOT TO CREATE CHANGE...
 5. BUT... TO BE HUMBLE AND WILLING "INSTRUMENTS OF CHANGE" IN THE HANDS OF THE ONE AND ONLY AUTHOR OF CHANGE.
- J. THAT MEANS THAT WE MUST LET GO OF HUMAN-POWERED, POST MODERN PSYCHOLOGICAL PARENTING HABITS.
1. WE MUST STOP...
 - a. the loud voices,
 - b. the escalating threats,
 - c. the subtle name calling,
 - d. words of condemnation,
 - e. ever-worsening punishments,
 - f. the silent treatment,
 - g. and withholding affection when our children have upset us.
 2. OUR CHILDREN VERY MUCH NEED US TO EXERCISE AUTHORITY.
 - a. BUT... NOT AS THE CREATOR OF CHANGE.
 3. THEY NEED US TO EXERCISE AUTHORITY AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF GOD... THE AUTHOR OF ALL LASTING CHANGE!
- K. NOW IN CASE YOU'RE WONDERING...
1. I'm NOT talking about forsaking your authority as a parent.
 2. I'm NOT talking about letting your children do whatever they want to do.
 3. I'm NOT talking about parenting that has no correction or discipline.
 4. I'm NOT talking about ignoring the wrong things that your children do or ever calling wrong right.

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5. What I AM talking about is the EXERCISE OF PARENTAL AUTHORITY THAT SUBMITS TO GOD'S POWER OF TRANSFORMING GRACE.
 - a. THAT KIND OF AUTHORITY...
 - 1) ABANDONS HOPE in HUMAN POWER and gladly PLACES its HOPE in the awesome POWER OF GOD.
 - b. IN HIS GRACE you get up every morning and surrender everything that you will DO and SAY that day to the GOD OF CHANGE who has SENT YOU TO BE HIS REPRESENTATIVE ("AGENT OF CHANGE" NOT "CHANGE AGENT").
6. REMEMBER: GOD'S PLAN IS TO MAKE HIS INVISIBLE GRACE VISIBLE BY SENDING PARENTS OF GRACE TO GIVE GRACE TO CHILDREN WHO DESPERATELY NEED GRACE!
- L. POWER TOOLS: THE THREE MOST OFTEN USED TOOLS OF PARENTAL POWER THAT PARENTS USE TO CREATE CHANGE IN OUR CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR.
 1. FEAR
 - a. The POWER that PARENTS BUY INTO HERE is that we can issue a BIG ENOUGH THREAT that WILL CREATE ENOUGH FEAR TO CHANGE OUR CHILDREN.
 - b. WHY DO PARENTS USE THREATS?
 - 1) BECAUSE SOMETIMES THEY ARE TEMPORARILY EFFECTIVE.
 - c. NOTE: HAVING A CHILD WHO HAS ENOUGH EXPERIENCE TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE GET ANGRY WHICH MAKES THEM AFRAID TO CROSS US, IS PROFOUNDLY DIFFERENT FROM HAVING A CHILD WHO IS MOTIVATED BY AN INTERNAL DESIRE TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT, AND... A KNOWLEDGE THAT THEY NEED GOD'S HELP IN ORDER TO DO IT!

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- d. **REMEMBER: OUR THREATS HAVE NOT STIMULATED INTERNAL CHANGE...**
 - 1) **RATHER, OUR THREATS ARE A SYSTEM OF EXTERNAL CONTROL.**
 - 2) **DO NOT FORGET THAT PARENTS REPRESENT THE ULTIMATE FATHER...**
 - i. **HE IS NOT SATISFIED WITH USING HIS POWER JUST TO CONTROL US**
 - ii. **BUT... HE EXERCISED HIS AUTHORITY BY SENDING HIS SON TO RADICALLY RESCUE AND TRANSFORM US.**
- e. **IF RULES AND REGULATIONS had the POWER TO CHANGE THE HEARTS AND LIVES of our CHILDREN... JESUS WOULD HAVE NEVER NEEDED TO COME!**
- f. **SUMMARY: THREAT WITHOUT GRACE IS A TOOL OF EXTERNAL CONTROL THAT WILL FAIL TO CHANGE YOUR DAUGHTER OF SON IN THE FOUNDATIONAL WAY THAT EVERY CHILD NEEDS TO BE CHANGED.**
- 2. **REWARD**
 - a. **BY USING THIS POWER TOOL, WE MANIPULATE OUR CHILDREN TO DO WHAT WE WANT THEM TO DO BY HOLDING CERTAIN REWARDS IN FRONT OF THEM.**
 - 1) This **STRATEGY** should **NOT** be **CONFUSED** with God's righteous work of **MOTIVATING OUR OBEDIENCE BY THE PROMISE OF SPIRITUAL REWARD.**
 - i. **"IF YOU DO _____ I WILL GIVE YOU _____."**
 - b. **REWARD TEACHES OUR CHILD the SKILL OF MORAL ECONOMICS!**
 - 1) **A COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS.**

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i. “Is the REWARD they are OFFERING me a **BIG ENOUGH PAYMENT** for the BEHAVIOR they **WANT FROM ME?**”

c. Like FEAR, this POWER TOOL will produce what you’re looking for **ONLY FOR A WHILE.**

3. SHAME

a. SHAME AND ITS PARTNER GUILT are POWER TOOLS that PARENTS use MORE FREQUENTLY than we RECOGNIZE.

b. Making our child feel HORIZONTAL GUILT (this GUILT is about US) is VERY DIFFERENT from GIVING OUR CHILD INSIGHT INTO THEIR HEARTS THAT CAUSE THEM TO FEEL VERTICAL GUILT (this is SORROW WITH RESPECT TO GOD) AND THE DESIRE TO CHANGE.

c. LIKE ALL TOOLS OF PARENTAL CONTROL, GUILT AND SHAME HAVE A SHORT-TERM POSITIVE EFFECT AND A LONG TERM NEGATIVE EFFECT.

1) THAT LONG TERM NEGATIVE EFFECT IS OFTEN REBELLION.

d. OUR CHILDREN WILL BEGIN SEE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OUR USING THE SAME OLD TOOLS TO MOTIVATE THEIR BEHAVIOR TO DO SOMETHING...

1) AND US LOVINGLY BEING GOD’S TOOL TO HELP THEM BE SOMETHING!

e. REMEMBER: THEY ARE CALLED THE BEATITUDES... NOT THE DOATITUDES!

4. CONCLUSION: REMEMBER, the GREATEST DANGER TO OUR CHILDREN is NOT THE EVIL OUTSIDE THEM... IT IS THE SIN INSIDE THEM THAT IS THE GREATEST THREAT TO THEIR WELL-BEING.

A. THAT IS WHY MITIGATING OUR CHILD’S BEHAVIOR WITH RULES AND THREATS OF PUNISHMENT ALONE WILL NOT CHANGE THEIR SIN NATURE!!!

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B. In JESUS GOD MADE A WAY FOR US...

1. SEE our sin,
2. to CONFESS it,
3. to be granted COMPLETE FORGIVENESS,
4. and to be blessed with both the DESIRE and the POWER to CHANGE.
 - a. OURSELVES
 - b. AND OUR CHILDREN

C. It is IMPORTANT FOR US TO REMEMBER 2 THINGS:

1. PARENTING IS THE WORK GOD HAS CALLED US TO.
 - a. WE MUST NOT SETTLE FOR ANYTHING ELSE.
2. WE DO NOT HAVE THE POWER TO DO THIS WORK ON OUR OWN.
 - a. RECOGNIZING OUR INABILITY IS ESSENTIAL...
 - 1) TO BEING WHO WE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE
 - 2) AND DOING WHAT WE ARE SUPPOSED TO DO AS PARENTS.

D. GOOD PARENTING lives at the INTERSECTION of a HUMBLE ADMISSION OF PERSONAL POWERLESSNESS AND A CONFIDENT PEACE IN THE POWER AND GRACE OF GOD.

E. The QUESTIONS for you right now ARE:

1. Do you have that PEACE?
2. Is your parenting driven by WORRY that causes you to DO and SAY THINGS that you SHOULD NOT DO or SAY?
3. Do you find yourself being WILLING TO SETTLE for CONTROL, rather than giving yourself to the HARD PROCESS of CHANGE?
4. Are you working to get your children to do what YOU WANT THEM TO DO rather than helping them to be what GOD WANTS THEM TO BE?

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5. Do you **PARENT** with a **POWERFUL** and **LOVING REDEEMER** in **VIEW**?
6. **NOTE: GOD IS WITH YOU.**
 - a. He **WANTS** what is BEST for YOU and YOUR CHILDREN, and no one but HIM has the POWER TO PRODUCE IT.
 - b. He has NOT placed the **BURDEN OF CHANGE** ONLY on **YOUR** shoulders because HE WOULD NOT REQUIRE YOU TO DO WHAT YOU CANNOT DO ALONE.
 - c. God has simply CALLED YOU AS A PARENT to be a HUMBLE and FAITHFUL AGENT OF CHANGE in the LIVES OF YOUR CHILDREN.
 - 1) And for that there is **MOMENT BY MOMENT BY MOMENT GRACE**.