

Biblical Principles Of Parenting (Part 2)

Prov 22:6: We started a new series on parenting last week, based entirely on this verse

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

That is *the* pillar passage on parenting

Teach them, impart to them, develop in them – the knowledge, skills, and wisdom for

how to live; How they should *go* in life; The way

Referring to a life that's lived for the glory and purposes of God

And when they're old, they won't deviate from it; They'll continue to abide by it

Not that it's a *guarantee*, but a proverb; Something that's *generally* true

➤ The question is, how; *How* do we train our kids in the ways of God?

And the answer lies in a series of principles found throughout the Scriptures

So that's the journey we're going to embark on, starting with this

Principle #1 – Seek the Lord **yourself** (Is 55:6-7; Mt 6:33)

That's principle #1; And if you're thinking, "Wait a second; I thought this was about

parenting" – it is; And this is one of the biggest rocks of truth on which to base it

Especially if you're going to do it God's way

Get this one wrong, and none of the rest will be right

It comes from **Is 55:6-7** – [6] "*Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; [7] let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*"

If you're going to have any hope of pointing your child to the Lord, you have to seek him yourself; You have to know him yourself; You have to call on him yourself

You have to forsake *your* way, and walk in his; It's foundational

Or as Jesus said it in Mt 6:33, you have to seek the *kingdom* of God *first*

➤ Fail in that, and you don't have a *prayer* of training your kids biblically; You don't have a *prayer* of instilling a godly perspective; Or a passion to worship
Or a love for his Word; Or a trust in his sovereignty*****

You might be well adept at training them to be *successful* in life; You might be able to impart things of *temporal* value; But eternal? I don't think so

B/c there's nothing there to draw on; Your well is dry; Your knowledge is lacking; Your experience non-existent

You have to seek the Lord *yourself*; You have to know his way yourself; You have to love him yourself; You can't *lead* someone in the Way, if you're not going there yourself

➤ It's something Becky and I learned from the *Scriptures*, and something we learned by *experience*; We were only as good in our parenting . . .

As we were *diligent* in our discipleship; If we were in the Word, we had greater insight and a better perspective; Hands down; If we prayed, we were more patient

If we didn't, we were disasters; And about 3 degrees shy of the lunatic fringe

But at least our desire was there – our desire to seek the Lord ourselves; And love him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength

And more often than not, we did; And God blessed it

➤ And he'll do the same in you, if *you* seek him; And 9 times out of 10, so will your kids
If you genuinely seek the Lord, not in a hypocritical way that your kids can smell a *mile* away, but truly so – 9 times out of 10 your kids will too

Most of the *time*, they will love what you love; If you love sports, they'll love sports; If you love music, they'll love music; And if you love God, they'll love God

So don't miss the opportunity to lead your *kids* to the Lord, by seeking him yourself

By reading your Bible and praying, every day; By coming to church to worship and

learn, every week; By connecting with others in groups, during the week

That's how you seek the Lord; And that's the 1st principle by which to train your kids to do the same; Get *that* one wrong, and none of the rest will be right

Principle #2 – Love your **spouse** (Eph 5:25; Titus 2:4)

Husbands, the Bible says in Eph 5:25 – *love your wives*; And wives, the Bible says in

Titus 2:4 – love your husbands; IOW love your spouse; *Love* each other

What does that have to do with parenting? Everything

B/c loving your spouse creates an *atmosphere* of love; And century upon century of human experience tells us that kids *flourish* in such an environment

Like seedlings in the fertile soil of a warm greenhouse; It's almost *impossible* for them to go awry

If you're single, this obviously doesn't apply to you; Which makes it more difficult to train your kids in the way they should go; Not impossible, but harder
Emphasizing all the more the *importance* of this principle for those who *are* married

➤ Men, one of the best things you can do for your kids, is love their mom

Wives, one of the best things you can do, is love their dad

It's critical, that you *love* each other

Not just in your feelings, but in your words and deeds; In what you *say* to each other, and *about* each other; And what you *do* for each other

How you serve one another and defer to each other

It's critical that you love each other tangibly and outwardly

➤ And that *includes* the affection you show one another

Parents, it ought not to be a strange thing, for your kids to see you hug and kiss one another in your home; In fact, it ought to be a regular occurrence

When our girls were growing up, I can't tell you the number of times we would see them staring at us out of the corner of our eye, while kissing in the Living Room

And Becky would stop, a little sheepish, and say – "We can't do this right now"

And I'd say – "We most certainly can; We have a license"

And a few years later when they would catch us, they'd say something like – "Get a room"; To which I would show the utmost maturity and say – "*You* get a room"

And then go back to kissing my wife in the kitchen

It's not the *only* way you should express your love to one another in the presence of your kids, but it's certainly one of them

And together with all the rest, it's a rock-solid principle of parenting; Love your spouse

➤ But just in case you're not buying it, let me give you 4 reasons

1. It makes them feel secure

Which has all *kinds* of positive effects; From increased emotional stability, to greater confidence, to better social skills, and the list goes on

2. It increases respect

Husbands, if your son or daughter knows that you're head over heels about your wife – they will be less inclined to disrespect her, and more inclined to obey her

B/c they know, that if they cross *her*, they cross you

And wives, if your kids know that you're head over heels about your husband, and respect him to the hilt . . .

They'll be more inclined to listen to him, and follow his guidance

3. It models a good marriage

And they need it; Your kids *need* a God-honoring picture of marriage; Heaven knows they're not seeing it at their friend's house; Or on TV

They need to know what it looks like for a God-fearing husband and a Christ-exalting wife, to love each other; It reinforces the gospel, picture of it that marriage is . . .

And gives them a worthy goal for themselves someday

4. It guards against child-centered parenting

Loving your spouse, first and foremost, guards your heart and mind from loving your kids instead; Which is easy to do; Especially when your marriage isn't great

Like when your husband is persona non grata – gone even when he's there; Or mean from time to time; Or bull-headed; Or aloof

Not that *wives* aren't that way sometimes; But when a husband is, a wife tends to direct her love to her kids, creating a child-centered home

But it's not just bad marriages that tend that way, good ones do too sometimes

Parenting in such a way that their kids are the sole focus, and therefore think that the world not only *revolves* around them, but owes them

B/c that's what they experience at home (**Summary**)

Better to love your *spouse*; Better to cultivate *that* relationship; And repair *that* commitment; And kindle *those* feelings

It's the 2nd principle on which to base your parenting

Principle #3 – Be the parent

As in *fulfill* your role; Do what you're supposed to

Stop letting your *kids* call the shots, and start doing it yourself

Stop letting *them* rule the roost, and take back the coop

Stop letting *them* drive the wagon, and take over the reins

That's what I mean by *be the parent* – do what God has *entrusted* you to do

And for some, it's high time to start; B/c when you get right down to it . . .

• It's your responsibility (Prov 1:8-9; Eph 6:1)

Prov 1:8-9 – [8] *Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching, [9] for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck.* They're beautiful and valuable

And notice, that the *command* is for the kids to hear and *apply* what their parents say, and the *assumption* is that the parents say it

That they *fulfill* their role; And *accomplish* their responsibility

➤ And the same would be true of **Eph 6:1** – *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.* IOW do what they say in all godliness and holiness – *in the Lord* Implying, once again, that the parents are *giving* their kids something to obey

So from instructing your children and teaching them in the way they should go . . .*****

To telling them what to do and when – it's your responsibility *as a parent*, to *be* the parent; It's your responsibility

Not only that, but . . .

• God chose you (Gen 18:19)

Be the parent, b/c God *chose* you to be the parent

The most explicit example of which is found in **Gen 18:19**, where God is speaking, and gives the reason for revealing his plan to Abraham

[19] *For I have chosen him* [he says], *that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.*”

God not only chose Abraham to be the father of many nations like it says earlier, but to be a *parent*; *I have chosen him* [it says] . . .

That he may command his children and his household after him [following him] *to keep the way of the LORD*; That's parenting

Leading your household and children; Ensuring that they live righteously and justly; And receiving God's blessings b/c of it; He chose him for such things

➤ And the same is true of us*****

God has marked off the boundaries of *our* life, just like Abraham's; And ordained beforehand the good works *we* should do, just like him; Including parenting

He chose you just like he did Abraham; Whether your kids are born or adopted

He chose you to lead your kids in the way of the Lord, ensure that they follow it, and experience his blessings b/c of it

God chose you; Not for you to *abdicate* your responsibility, or sit *down* on the job, but to stand firm and fulfill it; To *be* the parent you are

And 3rd . . .

• Your kids need you (Prov 4:20-22)

Be the parent, b/c your kids *need* you to be the parent

Prov 4:20-22 – [20] *My son, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings.*

[21] *Let them not escape from your sight; keep them within your heart.* [22] *For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh.*

Your kids *need* your instruction – your godly, biblical guidance

They need your patient teaching; Your Spirit-filled wisdom; Your encouragement and exhortation; They need it

It not only leads to *life* for them, v22, life to the full and life forever – but it's healing to *all their flesh*; Or, as Prov 12:18 says it – *the tongue of the wise brings healing*
And *gracious words are health to the body* (Prov 16:24)

Did you know that? Your words, especially as a parent, have the power to build up or tear down, *physically*; Actually affecting your child's *health*

Like when you're too harsh; *A crushed spirit dries up the bones* it says (Prov 17:22)

Or when you point them in the wrong direction in life, or no direction at all, and they thrash about to the detriment of their well-being

Your instruction, or lack thereof, has the power to heal, or hurt (**Summary**)

In which case, your kids desperately, desperately need you to be the parent God has chosen for them; They *need* you to fulfill your God-given responsibility

➤ And if you've dropped the ball on that, now is a good time to . . .

Repent – To admit your failure, ask for forgiveness, and commit to do better
That's where good parenting starts

Apply yourself – Learn, and get after it

I remember studying parenting in one of the first small groups Becky and I were in

There were about 5 couples, we all had babies, and we didn't have a clue

But we applied ourselves – we learned, and we put it into practice, and God blessed it

Do what's best

If you're going to be the parent that you are, commit right now to do what's best, no matter what; No matter what the pain, no matter what the backlash . . .

No matter what the difficulty; B/c the result is worth it; Even if it gets worse before it gets better; And it might

But with their life and health on the line, you have to do what's best

Conquer your fears

I remember standing over Jessica's crib when we first brought her home, constantly making sure she was breathing by watching her chest

Or, by licking my finger and putting it in front of her nose

I was afraid; Afraid she would stop breathing

Which was really a fear that God wouldn't take care of her; Or us, if she died

And then later, it was a fear that our girls wouldn't like us if we held firm to our convictions; Or demanded that their hearts were right

What if they rebel? What if they curse God and die? What if they run away?

It was fear upon fear, and we *had* to conquer them

First by identifying them, and then acknowledging them, and then trusting God for them

➤ If you're going to be the parent God calls you to be (**Summary**) . . .

If you're going to be the parent your kids *need* you to be – you have to conquer your fears, do what's best, and apply yourself

While always seeking the Lord, and always loving your spouse, first

Pray – Lord, forgive us of our parenting failures; Forgive us of abdicating our responsibilities; We need your grace, and we need your help

Receive our tithes/offerings now; For the work of your church and the fame of your name