

Pk's Perspectives ... Parenting

Raising children is an incredible adventure. Think about it: parents are tasked with leading a little person from the utopia of “Everything is provided to me” into the reality of “I’ve got to work for a living.” In fact, maybe we should more accurately define parenting this way: “We’re not raising children, we’re raising adults.” Our children enter this world with a built-in safety net and parents are given the responsibility of gradually eliminating the safety net. Wise, godly parents understand that their children need the loving, firm, consistent, guiding hand of an authority figure much more than they need a hip, cool, bff, weak-willed parental unit.

In the absence of wise parental leadership, some children become extremely obnoxious and defiant, especially in public places. Perhaps the best example was a ten-year-old boy named Robert, who was a patient of Dr. William Slonecker. During one physical examination, Dr. Slonecker observed severe cavities in Robert’s teeth and knew that the boy must be referred to a local dentist. But who would be given the honor? A referral like Robert could mean the end of a professional friendship. Dr. Slonecker eventually decided to send Robert to an older dentist who reportedly understood children. The confrontation that followed now stands as one of the classic moments in the history of human conflict.

Robert arrived in the dental office, prepared for battle. “Get in the chair, young man,” said the dentist. “NO CHANCE!!” replied the boy. “Son, I told you to climb onto the chair, and that’s what I intend for you to do,” said the dentist. Robert stared at his opponent for a moment and then replied, “If you make me get in that chair, I will take off ALL my clothes.”

The dentist calmly said, “Son, take ‘em off.” Robert proceeded to remove his shirt, pants, undershirt, shoes, socks, and underwear. “Now, son, get in the chair,” said the dentist. Robert did as he was told, and sat cooperatively through the entire procedure. When the cavities were drilled and filled, the boy was instructed to step down from the chair. “Give me my clothes back,” said the boy. “I’m sorry,” replied the dentist. “Tell your mother that we’re going to keep your clothes tonight. She can pick them up tomorrow.” Can you comprehend the shock Robert’s mother received when the door to the waiting room opened, and there stood her pink son, as naked as the day he was born? The room was filled with patients, but Robert and his mom walked past them and into the hall. They went down a public elevator and into the parking lot, ignoring the snickers of onlookers.

The next day, Robert’s mother returned to retrieve her son’s clothes, and asked to have a word with the dentist. However, she did not come to protest. These were her sentiments: “You don’t know how much I appreciate what happened here yesterday. You see, Robert has been blackmailing me about his clothes for years. Whenever we are in a public place, such as a grocery store, he makes unreasonable demands of me. If I don’t immediately buy him what he wants, he threatens to take off all his clothes. You are the first person who has called his bluff, doctor, and the impact on Robert has been incredible!” *Yes – this is a true story.*

Andy Stanley once said, “Your greatest contribution to the Kingdom of God may not be something you do but someone you raise.” As a parent, what are you willing to sacrifice to raise children that follow hard after Christ? You might want to adopt Jen Hatmaker’s parenting prayer: “Lord, teach me to parent the children I have; not the child I was, or the kids I thought I would have!” Cya in Sunday School & Worship, PK.