

Building Character

Keeping up with the parents - Series
Ps. Waweru & Ps Evie– 14 May 2017
Sermon Notes



Last week, we started off our parenting series **keeping up with the Parents.**

We talked about the dilemma of child led parenting, where children determine what parents do. We said there are five things our parenting and raising kids should impart into the kids' lives.

1. **A healthy self-esteem** – Being able to view themselves as God does.
 - o **Your word**-Affirm them consistently. Vocalize your belief in them. Tell them they matter, and that you love them.
 - o **Your touch**- Hug your kids, play with them, tuck them to bed, and let them know your touch communicates love. It's amazing how many times Jesus touched people when he didn't need to.
 - o **Your look**- Look at them in the eye as you talk to them. It communicates they are worthy of respect.
 - o **Your marriage** – Kids are not ready to handle adult emotions yet, so manage conflict carefully, and love each other. Give them a safe space to grow in.
2. **A sense of personal competence** – They have something to offer the world.
3. **Relational skills** or what is called emotional and relational intelligence
4. **Personal Integrity** – in the character of the child
5. **Spiritual godliness**- A fear of the Lord, and a desire to obey his commands.

Today we will continue on and talk about creating a sense of **personal competence** and growing their **relational intelligence or skills**

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Pastor Evie

I must say that parenting is for the courageous and not the perfect ones. We are all growing and learning in this, and I want you all to know that God has anointed you for the task. Whether you are a current parent or you will be one in the future.

- Parenting happens all the time even when you don't think it is happening. Your kids are observing at all times. Kids are like wet cement, they are very shapeable!
- You can plan your parenting, but often times life doesn't follow a plan – it just happens and the most teachable moments are unscripted . . .
- It's important to look out for them and grab them! These are what you call "teachable moments."
- While you are seated at home and talking around the dinner table, walking along the road, driving them to school or out shopping (how you interact with shop assistants). They are listening and learning from you.
- The three most critical parenting moments happen during travel, during mealtime, and during bedtime.

Pastor Wa

So, how do we **Build a sense of personal competence in Children**

Have you ever heard about the theology called "**The Way of the Ant**"? It's found in **Proverbs 6:6 – 7** (NIV). *Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!*⁷ *It has no commander, no overseer or ruler,*⁸ *yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.*

Every child needs to grow up with a deep sense of "I can do something!" You see – Self-esteem is good but it is not enough in and of itself. It will not put food on the table, it will not get them a job . . . where **self-esteem has to do with value,** and **competence** has to do with **performance and ability** – that they know they can do something.

And competence training doesn't wait until they have grown up and picked a career . . . it has to begin early, while they are still a child. But unfortunately, with our over-focus on education, with kids growing up in homes where everything is done for them by maids . . . it's possible to bring up children who have no sense of personal competence.

In many societies around the world it was assumed that children would be an important contributors to community living. They went out to the farm, they herded goats and cows, and they cleaned and washed. Indeed the whole school calendar in the Northern hemisphere was set so that children would be free in summer to help with the farm work.

So much so that by the age of 18 years a young man was a man – very competent, able to make solid decisions, ready to marry and bring up children, able to look after his family because he had had responsibility and work thrust on him and he had developed multiple competencies early on.

Pastor Evie

But this is no-longer the case today. Our children, especially for those who are wealthy, can hardly do anything for themselves. Normal basic house chores. This is foreign to them. They can't cook, they can't clean, they can't fold clothes, and they don't know how to clean their own space, can't polish their shoes, or have any responsibility placed on them.

Everything is done for them by a helper. They don't have developed skills for handling life. By 17 they can't do anything for themselves. They are the exact sluggard that Prov 6 talks about.

It's an established fact that if we parents take time to train, and instruct, and coach and inspire our children early on and give them ample challenges & opportunities, gradually children will learn the inner satisfaction that achievement provides. And eventually a child will be able to say *"If I learn well, and persevere at a task, if I take risks and keep trying even if at first I fail, eventually I will succeed. I can do it"*.

Pastor Wa

Obviously we're not advocating driving little children like slave masters to read, write and work like adults . . . but developing this sense of confidence and ability in the life of a child will be crucial for their eventual success.

Sometimes our kids can't do anything because they have a parent who is not patient with them, who cuts them down when they try and fail, who laughs at them because they can't do it as well as she can, or who criticize them telling them how *"When I was your age I could do twice as much!"* Parents who cut down, scorn, scold their children are communicating to them *"You're dumb, you're foolish, how stupid can you get, even an idiot could do that, you can't finish anything you do, you'll never be a real man, no-one will ever marry you . . ."* and it kills something in the child.

Pastor Evie

But if we love our children, and want them to be whole – then

- Challenge them-Give them something that stretches them.
- Train them-Show them how it's done
- Give them responsibilities-Let them take on a role. A pet, doing dishes, a project etc.
- Let them fail . . . Allow them to learn from mistakes.

And when they do –

- Coach them, and inspire them
- and cheer them on and encourage them
- Help them keep trying until they succeed . . . *Don't allow them to quit.*

Express how proud you are of them, and how much potential you see in them! You can never compliment your kids enough.

Emotional/Relational Intelligence

Pastor Evie

Our emotions help us gather, organize, prioritize, recall and process information which is essential to both health and happiness. It helps a child deal with threatening situations, know how to talk with and serve others, make good moral decisions and defend them, know how to articulate their feelings and what the limits of personal space is.

Without emotional intelligence a child is naïve and too trusting, or too afraid of the world, is gullible and easy to deceive, and is easily taken advantage of.

Psychologists talk about four different areas of emotional intelligence:

- The first is the ability to **Perceive Emotions**: this might involve understanding nonverbal signals such as body language and facial expressions, threatening actions, suspicious behavior and the likes.
- The second is **Understanding Emotions**: The emotions that we perceive can carry a wide variety of meanings. If someone is expressing angry emotions, the observer must interpret the cause of their anger and what it might mean. For example differentiating between a boss who shouts because he's dissatisfied with your work; and one who shouts because he had a 'dome' with his wife before he left home.
- The third is knowing how to **Manage your emotions**. Regulating emotions, responding appropriately, managing anger or disappointment without spilling it out on the wrong people . .
- And finally the **ability to use Emotions with purpose**: the art of using emotions to promote thinking, to persuade people, to choose between passion and humor.

Pastor Wa

As an adult emotional intelligence is most visibly seen as relational intelligence – or what is called Relational IQ. It serves you by enabling you to work well on a team, know how to read people's emotions, lead in tough situations, motivate others, call them to sacrifice, and know how to deal with their anger, scorn, ridicule or compliments.

And as I said before – you see the important place of emotional intelligence when you interact with a mentally challenged child – they don't perceive any of the cues to take in relational situations.

- But even badly brought up children can have a low Emotional IQ with no sense of space, or occasion; no respect for adults or title, and no sense of appropriate behavior except when they are put on a leash – they can't read situations for themselves.
- **Emotional intelligence gives you a competitive edge**. A high IQ may land you a prestigious job as a Fiscal Analyst in some high flying company, but it is a high Emotional IQ that will enable you to nurture your children and for your marriage to survive; or give you the skills needed to lead a team, and serve as a CEO. A low Emotional IQ might also explain why people of high IQ can be such disastrous pilots of their own personal lives, clever, but unable to navigate relationships, like geeks for example.

Luke 2:52 gives us a prayer that we ought to pray and desire for our children. Jesus grew in wisdom, and stature and favor with both God and man.

Pastor Evie

So how do you develop Relational intelligence?

- a. **Teach them to host**-Let them learn how to give warm welcomes and warm farewells.
Teach them how to ask good questions-or even powerful questions that engage people in conversation. Not just about them, but about the other person. 70% of conversations should be coming from your guest or another person, not you.
- b. **Teach them rules of Interaction**
- Honor your hosts when you visit
 - Respect the rules of the home
 - Have boundaries with other kids and adults.
 - Don't go off with strangers
- Remember our family rules.
- c. **Model how to resolve conflict**
- Let them learn to admit their feelings and deal with them or express them correctly. No fighting when angry. Help them know how to process feelings and not stuff them inside.
 - Practice with them how to resolve difficult issues and not be afraid of hard conversations. Practice with them how to go about situations
 - Give positive feedback and affirm them when they respond correctly, when they are patient or diffuse a difficult situation.
 - Help them to know boundaries in relationships and how to maintain them.

Prayer and ministry

- a. Lea sign-ups for September class.
- b. God to help parents with courage and skill to impart Sense of Personal competence and emotional intelligence.
- c. Bless the families

Numbers 6:22

The Lord bless you, and keep you;

The Lord make His face shine on you,

And be gracious to you;

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you,

And give you peace."

So we invoke God's name on you the sons and daughters of God, and He shall bless you."