

PAUL DAVID TRIPP



P A R E N T I N G

**Parenting - 2/11/26 - Ambassadors
Paul David Trip “Parenting”**

Parenting takes place on the fly when we’re not really paying attention and are greeted with things that we did not know we were going to be dealing with that day. It’s the repeated cycle of little unplanned moments that is the soul-shaping workroom of parenting.

This happens in the small mundane moments...Not grand significant moments that have stopped us in our tracks and commanded our full attention...

Big Picture Parenting Worldview – explain, guide, and motivate all the things that God calls them to do as parents. This will change the way you make sense of your tasks and change the way you approach it.

When you parent with what the gospel says about God, you, your world, your children, and God’s grace, you not only approach parenting in brand-new ways, but you carry the burden of parenting in a very different way.

This starts with knowing who you are as a parent.

Opening questions

What is the purpose of parenting?

What is the difference between behavior change and heart change?

What makes you a good parent?



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Ownership

- These children belong to me, so I can parent them in the way I see fit. We look at our children as belonging to us, and we end up doing things that are short-sighted, not helpful in the long-run, more reactive than goal-oriented, and outside of God's great, big, wise plan.
- Ownership parenting is not overly selfish, abusive, or destructive; it involves a subtle shift in thinking and motivation that puts us on a trajectory that leads our parenting far away from God's design.
- Ownership parenting is motivated and shaped by what parents want for their children and from their children. Driven by a vision of what we want our children to be and what we want our children to give us in return.

Ambassadors

- Good parenting, which does what God intends it to do, begins with this radical and humbling recognition that our children don't actually belong to us. Rather, every child in every home, everywhere on the globe, belongs to the One who created him or her. Children are God's possession (Psalm 127:3) for his purpose. That means that his plan for parents is that we would be his agents in the lives of these ones that have been formed into his image and entrusted to our care.
- Ambassadors faithfully represent the message, methods, and character of the leader who has sent him. He is not free to think, speak, or act independently. Everything he does, every decision he makes, and every interaction he has must be shaped by this one question: "What is the will and plan of the one who sent me?"
- The ambassador does not represent his own interest, his own perspective, or his own power.
- Every parent everywhere is called to recognize that they have been put on earth at a particular time and in a particular location to do one thing in the lives of their children. What is the one thing? God's will!
- Parenting is not first about what we want for our children or from our children, but about what God in grace has planned to do through us in our children.
- The thing that constantly gets in the way of our ambassadorial calling as parents is us. Humbly confessing this is the first step in your ambassadorship.

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Ownership Parenting/Ambassadorial Parenting

Identity - Where you look to find your sense of who you are.

Owner: Owner parents tend to look to get their identity, meaning, purpose, and inner sense of well-being from their children. Their children tend to be saddled with the unbearable burden of their parents' sense of self-worth. I have to say this: parenting is a miserable place to look for your identity, if for no other reason than the fact that every parent parents sinners. Children come into the world with significant brokenness inside of them that causes them to push against the authority, wisdom, and guidance of their parents. Parents who are looking to their children for identity tend to take their children's failures personally, as if they were done against them intentionally, and respond to their children with personal hurt and anger. But the reality is that God simply does not give you children in order for you to feel that your life is worthwhile.

Ambassador: Parents who approach parenting as representatives come to it with a deep sense of identity and are motivated by meaning and purpose. They don't need to get that from their children because they have gotten it from the One whom they represent: the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of this they are freed from coming to their children hoping that they will get from them what no child is able to give. They are freed from asking family life to give them life because they have found life and their hearts are at rest. Because of this, they are now freed to forget themselves and parent with the selflessness and sacrifice that ambassadorial parenting requires.

Reflection Questions

- How has ownership parenting played out in my life when it comes to my identity?
- Where does our true identity come from? Why is it so easy to forget this?
- How should this impact my parenting?



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Work - What you define as the work you have been called to do.

Owner: Owner parents think that their job is to turn their children into something. They have a vision of what they want their children to be, and they think that their work as parents is to use their authority, time, money, and energy to form their children into what they have conceived that they should be. I have counseled many children who were breaking under the burden of the constant pressure of parents who had a concrete vision and were determined that these children would be what these parents had decided they would be. Owner parents tend to think that they have the power and personal resources to mold their children into the children they envision.

Ambassador: Parents who really do understand that they are never anything more than representatives of someone greater, wiser, more powerful, and more gracious than they are know that their daily work is not to turn their children into anything. They have come to understand that they have no power whatsoever to change their children and that without God's wisdom they wouldn't even know what is best for their children. They know that what they have been called to be are instruments in the hands of One who is gloriously wise and is the giver of the grace that has the power to rescue and transform the children who have been entrusted to their care. They are not motivated by a vision of what they want their children to be, but by the potential of what grace could cause their children to be.

Reflection Questions

- How has ownership parenting played out in my life when it comes to my view of working hard to turn my child into something.
- Do I really believe I have no power whatsoever to change my child and that without God's wisdom wouldn't even know what's best for them?
- How much responsibility is on you as the parent for your child to turn out a certain way?
- How can that transform the way I view my work/job as a parent?



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Success - What you define success to be.

Owner: These parents tend to be working toward a specific catalog of indicators in the lives of their children that would tell them that they have been successful parents. Things like academic performance, athletic achievement, musical ability, and social likability become the horizontal markers of how well they have done their jobs. Now these things are not unimportant, but they simply are unable to measure successful parenting. Good parents don't always produce good kids, and parents should constantly be asking themselves where they get the set of values that tell them whether they have "good" kids or not. I am afraid that many good parents live with long-term feelings of failure because their children have not turned out the way they hoped.

Ambassador: These parents have faced the scary truth that they have no power at all to produce anything in their children. Because of this they haven't attached their definition of successful parenting to a catalog of horizontal outcomes. Successful parenting is not first about what you've produced; rather, it's first about what you have done. Let me say it this way: successful parenting is not about achieving goals (that you have no power to produce) but about being a usable and faithful tool in the hands of the One who alone is able to produce good things in your children.

Reflection Questions

- How has ownership parenting played out in my life when it comes to my view of success as a parent?
- How can I restructure my view of success as a parent?
- How do I know if I've been successful?
- How have you seen people respond with wayward children?



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Reputation - What tells people who you are and what you're about.

Owner: Owner parents unwittingly turn their children into their trophies. They tend to want to be able to parade their children in public to the applause of the people around them. This is why so many parents struggle with the crazy, zany phases that their children go through as they are growing up. They're not so much concerned about what that craziness says about their children, but what it says about them. Children in these homes feel both the burden of carrying their parents' reputation and the sting of their disappointment and embarrassment. Owner parents tend to be angry and disappointed with their children, not first because they've broken God's law, but because whatever they have done has brought hassle and embarrassment to them.

Ambassador: These parents have come to understand that parenting sinners will expose them to public misunderstanding and embarrassment somehow, someday. They have come to accept the humbling messiness of the job God has called them to do. And they understand that if their children grow and mature in life and godliness, they become not so much their trophies, but trophies of the Savior that they have sought to serve. For them, it's God who does the work and God who gets the glory; they are just gratified that they were able to be the tools that God used.

Reflection Questions

- How has ownership parenting played out in my life regarding my reputation among my peers?
- How can I prepare myself for public misunderstanding and embarrassment?

