

Love Your Kids!

Genesis Texts

Intro. – Author, Ed Young writes in his book *The Ten Commandments of Parenting*: “At retirement parties, people give testimonials to departing long-time employees...there are tears... and tales of triumph. Retirement parties are good opportunities for people to know how their close associates view them... There are no retirement festivities or farewell banquets though for parents. Take it from me, the job is never done...”

Suppose a retirement party was being held for you as a parent. Let’s further suppose your kids were at this party and as you enter the room you see your kids all grown up, ready to give their testimonials. Ed Young said in this same book when facing such a situation “*You don’t know if you’re about to be roasted or toasted!*”

It would be wise of every parent/grandparent present to contemplate what your kids’ testimonies about you would be. What will they say about you as a parent? What will they remember about you as a parent? Their conclusions will reflect their understanding of the love or lack there of they received from you.

Let me illus. further. Young mother approached a French teacher asking, “How quickly can I learn French?” Teacher responded, “That depends entirely upon you. Why are you in such a rush?” Mother replied, “We just adopted a French baby 6 weeks ago and we want to be able to understand him when he starts to talk.”

My point is this - there are way too many parents out there who haven’t a clue as to how to go about parenting. They certainly don’t understand the urgency behind something so basic as simply loving their kids. Do you love your kids? Do they know you love them? How do they know you love them?

Purpose: to better understand what all is behind loving your kids

Want to present a set of parents who will do a solid job of teaching you and me to love our kids. Their names are Abraham /Sarah. How they related to their son Isaac shows parental love foreign to the world’s.

I LOVE BY DEVELOPING

- to really love your kids is to give them a strong identity – this will enable them live with confidence/assurance. We live in an identity-assaulting world. If our kids have a strong sense of who they are and why they exist, they will not allow the world to define and mold them.

A. Understand Your Child

1. Each kid is different – saying is true “When God made Abraham Lincoln He threw away the mold.” But it’s also true for you and your kids...
2. One of the most important things a parent can do for and to their child is understand them as an individual... To do this, parents must be expert listeners and observers...
 - a. James 1:19 “*This you know, my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger.*” -- note: this is especially true for parents.
 - b. Jesus demonstrated total understanding of individuals during His earthly ministry. He related to their emotions e.g. when they rejoiced He rejoiced... when cry He cried (Gospel of John)
 - c. not to conclude Jesus controlled by people’s emotions but He did identify with, understood...
3. When you understand your child, unconsciously they realize they’re important enough for Mom and Dad to accept them for who they are and how they think – i.e. as unique individual.
 - listening, understanding parent will raise kids with a healthy self-respect.

B. Secure Your Child

1. One of the greatest things parents can give their kids is a secure home life:
 - a. Ephesians 5:25 “*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.*”
 - b. Ephesians 5:22 “*Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*”
2. Unconditional love must be evident to each child
 - a. it is true that the Lord will discipline us, but such is proof of His love – Hebrews 12:6 “*For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines...*” real love = discipline...
 - b. discipline essential for helping a child be secure = child without boundaries will not be safe...
3. Love based discipline is corrective not merely punitive = “You are worth correcting” = security!

C. Affirm Your Child

1. By affirm mean, let your child know they are significant in God's plans, thus in your plans too...
2. Catch your kids doing good and praise them... identify their strengths and emphasize...
3. Kids who never get affirmation from parents react in 1 of 2 ways: rebel... have love self image...
4. Isaac's parents didn't *program* him for failure. They developed his life through lots of love!

II LOVE BY MODELING

- Genesis 22, recorded the Mount Moriah event... here's what took place:

A. God Instructs Abraham to Sacrifice Isaac

1. Genesis 22:1-2 (read) – can you imagine the struggle this created in Abraham's mind? What sense did this command make?... Why did God command this?... Wasn't Isaac the son of promise?...
2. Big quandary before Abraham: Obey God and lose my son, or disobey God?
3. Abraham acted out his heroic faith (trust) knowing that God would make this matter right...so loaded donkey, bundled up Isaac and away they went to Mt. Moriah.

B. Abraham Offers His Son

1. Isaac put two and two together and realized he was the sacrifice... Genesis 22:12 *"And He said, 'Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.'"*
2. Isaac never forgot that experience and learned on that day a lesson that transformed his life.
3. Isaac saw clearly that God had first place, top priority in the lives of his mom and dad – Abraham and Sarah modeled faith to their son
4. Point: how well are you modeling your faith and commitment to your kids? What priority does the Lord and His Church have in your lives and do your kids know it? Are you being the example your kids need to draw them to the Lord?

III LOVE BY BUILDING

- what kind of a *legacy* are you leaving your kids?

- Genesis 12:8 *"Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord."*

A. Abraham Pitched His Tent

1. The significance behind this is the fact that Abraham recognized how temporary this life is and that this world was not his home – Hebrews 11:9-10 *"By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations whose architect and builder is God."*
2. Abraham and Sarah passed along to their son, Isaac the temporariness of this life...

B. Abraham Built an Altar

1. This deals with the eternality of matters that concern God and heaven...
2. Abraham wanted his kids to know that it is the matters of God that are permanent – not the things of the world... this world is destined to be utterly destroyed by God
3. Here's my point: far too many do the exact opposite of Abraham – we build tents and pitch altars. I.e. we attach permanence to houses, lands, possessions, this world while treating matters of God as temporary or nice if we have the time, money and energy to do so.
4. Too many tend to be like Lot – Genesis 13:8-12 *"Then Abram said to Lot, 'Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers. Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me: if to left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left.' And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere... Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley and moved his tents as far as Sodom."*
 - a. Lot eventually moved into the town and the results were disastrous...
 - b. way too many parents resemble the legacy of Lot rather than that of Abraham!

Conclusion: Several years ago a team of New York sociologists made a study of two families, beginning in the 18th century coming into and including the 20th century. These sociologists wanted to see if a legacy – negative or positive – could indeed influence coming generations. The two families traced in this study were the families of Max Jukes and Jonathan Edwards:

Max Jukes was an atheist married to an agnostic. 1200 descendants of this tough-minded couple were studied with the following results:

1. of the 1200, 440 descendants lived in outright debauchery.
2. 310 were vagrants
3. 190 were prostitutes
4. 130 were convicted as criminals
5. 100 were alcoholics
6. more than 100 were habitual thieves
7. 55 suffered from sexually transmitted diseases.
8. seven were murderers

A contemporary to Max Jukes was Jonathan Edwards, preacher, missionary, theologian and President of Princeton University. Edwards and his wife Sarah, passed along a godly legacy to their decedents:

1. more than 300 were preachers, missionaries or theologians
2. more than 120 were professors
3. 110 were lawyers
4. 60 were medical doctors
5. 60 were authors of helpful books
6. 30 were judges
7. 14 were university presidents
8. three were members of Congress
9. one was vice president of the United States

Make no mistake, parents who prepare their kids by developing the right self image, by modeling the right trust/faith, by building the right kind of legacy are on the biblical tract. These are the kind of parents who will make the difference in time and eternity. These are the parents who really do love their kids!