

# “Intentionally Mold Their Hearts!”

## 1 Samuel 1

**Intro.** – A young preacher took his first full-time church. He preached a message one Sunday entitled: “10 Facts on How to Raise Perfect Kids!” Few years later, he got married and they had their 1st child. He pulled out that old sermon to preach again, but decided to retitle it: “10 Suggestions to Raise Healthy Kids!” After the 2nd child it was time to preach it again, but this time he entitled it: “10 Possibilities for Parenting Kids!” Well, the 3rd child came. This time he revised the whole thing calling it: “10 Prayers for Parents!” Years later when they all became teen-agers, he burned the sermon and wrote a whole new message entitled: “Help Me Jesus!”

Parenting isn’t for cowards is it? Erma Bombeck said in one of her books that she was frustrated by her children from the moment they were born. She remembered *how* she got three kids, but she couldn’t recall *why*. She decided maybe they were a 4-H project that got out of hand. Ogden Nash has been attributed with: “Oh, what a tangled web do parents weave, when they think their children are naïve.”

With this as background let me intro. 2 questions we ought to be asking ourselves as parents, grandparents, adults: 1) What forces are molding our kids? 2) What methods are we using to influence their hearts? Plato some 300 + yrs. before Christ’s birth contemplated the significance of influences on children: “And shall we just carelessly allow children to hear any casual tale which may be devised by casual persons, and to receive into their minds ideas for the most part the very opposite of those which we wish them to have when they are grown up?”

*Casual persons* represent the influences that shape our kids by default. In stark contrast, we parents are to be *intentional* in raising our kids. Too often the *casual* powers in culture are more *intentional* than parents. That is they’re more committed to propagandizing our kids to their beliefs, values, causes and products.

*Purpose: to see the need to be totally intentional in molding our kids*

George Barna in his book *Revolutionary Parenting* writes: “Most of the thousands of parents we’ve interviewed in recent years have a survival-based philosophy rather than a goal-oriented philosophy.” By looking at some of the forces molding our kids and comparing them to what God’s Word says, we’ll be able to accomplish our purpose – we’ll be able to see how we must be intentionally molding our kids’ hearts:

## I Intentionally Consider the FORCES

### A. The Force of Culture

1. Culture is the outward manifestation of the way people believe and act – i.e. it’s the way society expresses its fundamental beliefs. Bible calls it *the world* – 1 John 2:15 “*Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*”
2. Music, entertainment, philosophies, books, art, you name it, are all elements of *culture*.
3. We all must concede that today we live in an entirely different culture as compared to the one most us were raised – some observers of modern culture say we live in a “toxic culture.”
  - Illus. – 1930’s Cole Porter wrote lyrics/music to musical “Anything Goes!” It was clean entertainment. Anything with that title today is in all probability not clean/worthy digesting!
4. Make no mistake – culture influences each of us more than we would like to admit!

### B. The Force of Peer Pressure

1. Parents often watch in a sense of helplessness as their kids depend on them less and less and more on their teenage friends for making moral decisions.
2. Believe Paul was broaching this matter, as well as, others in Romans 7:19 “*For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish. But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish.*” In peer pressure, we often do what we would never do left to ourselves...
3. We adults are the worst examples when it comes to this – peer pressure is learned early in age, but perfected as we grow older... Let’s acknowledge our need to be better examples in this matter!
4. We have the great need of teaching our kids to *THINK FOR THEMSELVES*...

### C. The Force of Public Schools

1. When you combine the influence of school mates (i.e. peer pressure) and the amoral philosophical drift of modern education, public schools become strongest *casual shaper* of our kids.
2. What makes this so dangerous is the assumption by many that because public education is mandatory, the final authority in many matters surrounding kids does NOT belong to the parents!
3. In 1972 the Supreme Court rejected this conclusion when it ruled in *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, that Amish parents weren't required to keep their kids in school after eighth grade.
  - Justice Wm Douglas wrote in his dissenting opinion on this: "Though parents would normally speak for the entire family, the education of a child is a matter on which the child will have decided views." I.e. parents responsibility for training up a child should be relinquished to the state...

If parents don't mold their kids', I promise *casual forces* will!

## II Intentionally Model the TRUTH

### A. What They See

1. Fact is your kids will do what you tell them for awhile, but eventually they will do what you do!
2. Old saying concerning parenting: "What *they* (kids) see is what you eventually get."
3. Moms and dads, what kind of lifestyle are you modeling to your kids? What priorities are you embedding in their impressionable minds? What examples are we being to them?
4. The lives we (adults, parents etc.) live serve as road maps for kids to choose and follow – e.g.
  - Illus. – 4-23-03, Jack Osbourne, 17 year old son of rocker Ozzy Osbourne, checked himself into a hospital for drug and alcohol addiction. Jack's father opened the 2<sup>nd</sup> season of their reality TV show *The Osbournes*, "boozing heavily to cope with his wife Sharon's diagnosis of colon cancer."

### B. Give Them the Best Model

1. Samuel = man of spiritual/political influence, a true Biblical hero... What kind of parent did have?
2. Elkanah and Hannah were God fearing and God honoring parents:
  - they modeled love for the Lord... and for each other to Samuel... security was modeled all done according to God's timetable...
3. 1 Samuel 1:21-22 "*Then the man Elkanah went up with all his household to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice and pay his vow. But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, 'I will not go up until the child is weaned; then I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord and stay there forever.'*"
  - a. they showed their love for Samuel by modeling to him to always live within God's will!
  - b. Elkanah and Hannah wanted Samuel to grow into the man God wanted him to be – they recognized their stewardship in this matter; thus, they modeled to him his spiritual DNA...

Parents unconcerned about the truth certainly will not model truth – Can't teach what you don't know and you can't lead where you won't go!

## III Intentionally be Faithful STEWARDS

- parents who take their role seriously understand this stewardship principle – a steward is a *manager* of someone else's property. In raising kids, these parents totally understand that concept...
- but then there are parents who haven't a clue as to what being a faithful steward entails:

### A. The Possessive Parents

1. These are the parents who think and act as if everything, especially kids, are their property. They own their children and act accordingly.
2. They have the attitude that they can do anything they want with their kids – from giving them mindless names and dressing them oddly to harming and abusing them.
3. These are the parents who live out their unfulfilled dreams through their kids even though their kids have little if any interest in doing so...

### B. The Delegating Parents

1. These are parents who allow their kids to come under the *casual forces* we've already discussed.
2. They play the "blame game" not accepting the stewardship responsibilities they've been given.

- a. if their kids aren't learning well, it's the school's fault...
  - b. if their kids aren't interested in church, it's the church's fault...
  - c. no intentions behind this kind of parenting – parenting by the seat of one's pants...
3. Expecting the schools, media, entertainment, daycares, i.e. government to take of them & theirs!

C. The Steward Parents

- 1. These are the parents that recognize kids are on loan from God – that parenting is serious business and that being given the responsibility of raising kids is no unintentional matter! PRIVILEGE!!
- 2. Elkanah and Hannah understood this and serve as great examples of steward parents:
  - a. they knew Samuel belonged to God and that God had entrusted him to them
  - b. they literally took responsibility for God's property – Samuel was God's!
  - c. that's how parenting ought to be today – God gives our kids to us, but He retains ownership!

Therefore, as parents we must always intentionally be faithful stewards especially with His kids!!

**Conclusion:** Resisting culture's assault on your home happens best when parents prioritize the following three principles. Let these principles serve as a summary to this message:

- 1. **Intentionally Build Your Relationship with God** – you can preach at your kids day and night, but if Christ and His Church are not real, not first in your life, it is highly likely He won't be in theirs. Kids have X-ray vision, they can see right through their parents' hypocrisy. However, if you're committed to Christ and His Church, X-ray vision won't be necessary.
- 2. **Intentionally Build Your Relationship with Your Spouse** – by focusing on your spouse you are modeling and showing to your kids what family and love really is. Building such a relationship takes intentional planning and follow-through.
- 3. **Intentionally Build Your Relationship with Your Kids** – reassure your kids you love them for who they are... no favoritism and no faking – remember they have X-ray vision.

Again, from Barna's book *Revolutionary Parenting* "The fact that neither government nor schools are the solution to the problem is not a big deal. That's because they are not the ones responsible for fixing the problem. The responsibility for raising spiritual champions, according to the Bible, belongs to parents. The spiritual nurture of children is supposed to take place in the home. Organizations and people from outside the home might support these efforts, but the responsibility is squarely laid at the feet of the family. This is not a job for specialists. It is a job for parents."

Intentionally consider the *casual forces*. Intentionally model the truth. Intentionally be faithful stewards!