

“Equip Them With Stability and Strength!”

1 Kings 7:21; James 1:5

Intro. – The pillar on the right (or to South) of Solomon’s Temple was given the name *Jachin*, and the pillar on the left (or the North) was given the name *Boaz*. *Jachin* comes from the Hebrew word that means “stability.” *Boaz* comes from the Hebrew word that means “strength.” Thus, it was no accident that God’s Temple was being held up by *stability* and *strength*. This was a foreshadow of the church and individuals who would make up the church (Ephesians 2:21; 1 Corinthians 6:19). If you are *in Christ* you have been added to His Church at the time of your becoming a Christian (Acts 2:47). Thus, it is by divine design that Christians be the *temple of God* with their lives secured by *stability* and *strength*. How then are kids to obtain *stability* and *strength* in their lives? Parents are the instruments through whom God has ordained this process take place. The parents who accomplish this task unleash kids who will be stable and secure when they become adults.

Let me illustrate. In the 1950’s, a psychologist, Stanton Samenow, and a psychiatrist, Samuel Yochelson, shared the conclusion that crime is caused by environment. These two set out to prove this point. They began a 17 year study involving thousands of hours of clinical testing of 250 inmates. To their astonishment, they discovered the cause of crime could not be traced to environment, poverty, or oppression. Instead, crime is the result of individuals making, as they put it, *wrong moral choices*. In their 1977 work *The Criminal Personality*, they concluded the answer to crime is a “conversion of the wrong-doer to a more responsible lifestyle.”

Nice of these guys to come around to what the Bible has said all along. Yet, those who call themselves “Christians” aren’t all that receptive to what the Bible says concerning raising kids. The Barna Research Group says a **small percentage** of those who call themselves Christians surveyed said their church or faith has been a dominant influence in the way they parent. Only half of these same parents mentioned anything related to faith (including the Bible or church) as a significant influence in how they raise their kids. Barna’s conclusion: of all “born-again parents 33% practice Biblical principles in parenting.”

Purpose: to better understand the need to rely on the wisdom of God in raising kids

Edward, Duke of Windsor said, “The thing that impresses me most about America is the way parents obey their children.” Author Gordon MacDonald writes, “More than not, children are learning major value systems in life from the horizontal peer-culture. The vertical structure is not there in adequate increments of time or intensity to do the job.” *Raising Self-Reliant Children in a Self-Indulgent World* by Stephen Glenn/Jane Nelsen “*When peers have dialogue primarily with peers, they fail to be exposed to those with more advanced insights and more highly developed faculties... Our children, who are constantly engrossed in peer-centered activities, interact minimally with those more mature than themselves.*” All of these illustrate a pattern in the wrong parenting style. The Biblical parenting style is what we ought to concern ourselves. There are two principles in the application of divine wisdom in parenting:

I Identify TEACHABLE MOMENTS

A. Key Moments in the Day

1. Deuteronomy 6:6-9 “*And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and while you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*”
2. This is not suggesting a “full-court press” style of parenting; instead, it is saying identify and use moments God will provide through everyday activities.
3. Key Moments come when a child has been hurt, or when their behavior comes back to sting them, when they did or didn’t make the team, or at certain stages of development in their lives...
4. These are opportunities to teach our kids deep principles of truth such as grace, mercy the dynamics of reaping what you sow, God never leaving or forsaking us...etc.
5. Through such key moments we show our kids that God’s truths are not true simply because they are in the Bible, but they are in the Bible because they *are* true!

B. A Biblical Worldview

1. Promise of the Bible is: If you utilize the teachable moments provided by God, you will then lead your kids in recognizing that God's truths are *essential* and *relevant* in every aspect of their lives.
2. Defining *worldview* – It is the *eyes* through which a person views reality, views life as a whole... i.e. its how one is taught and conditioned to view reality and the world as a whole.
3. A Biblical worldview pushes aside the presuppositions and assumptions taught by the world which seeks to instill fear and hopelessness and teaches you and me to view the world through the lens of God's Word – This alone instills stability and strength.
 - Illus. – e.g. present furor over global climate changing. All the propaganda being foisted through the news media... when the Bible point blanks says there will be the changing of seasons up to the very end of time (Genesis 8:22 “*While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.*”)
4. Proverbs 2:1-6 reveals a direct link between wisdom, stability and strength: “*My son, if you will receive my sayings, and treasure my commandments within you, make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding; for if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding. If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will discern the fear of the Lord, and discover the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.*”

C. Created With Purpose

1. Kids who grow up knowing they are the greatest of God's creation; thus, they have a message that is unique and vital to the world.
2. Kids who are stabilized and secure in God's truths will know that God created them with divine purpose and has empowered them to defend and promote that divine purpose.
3. These are the kids that will be wise enough to understand they are in a sin beaten and dying world but headed for a world of eternal life!
4. Point: show your kids what it means to really be *a Christian*... and teach them to embrace God's grace and the resulting life in doing so...

II Excel in EQUIPPING

- this second principle in applying wisdom in parenting – this means being an equipper and nothing else:
- A. Consider the Whole Picture
 1. Illustrate what I mean by whole picture: Man was walking past construction site. He asked one worker what he was doing. “Laying bricks,” grunted back the man. The man asked another laborer what he was doing, “Earning a living, mister, just earning a living.” Finally, the onlooker asked the same question to a third worker. With obvious enthusiasm, the bricklayer said, “I’m building a cathedral!”
 2. Sadly, when it comes to raising kids, some parents are simply *laying bricks* or *trying to stay alive!*
 - a. they have no intentional plan for the life(lives) God has placed in their hands.
 - b. parenting to them is putting food in their stomach, clothes on their bodies, and roof over head while someone else puts education in their brain... life to them simply laying brick!
 3. Other parents see their duty like the worker who was merely earning a living. Kids are nothing more than a burdensome responsibility... someone has to grimly take on task of raising them...
 4. The third worker illustrates the equipping parent
 - B. Be an Equipper Not a Transformer
 1. Parents who are *equippers* see and move toward the whole picture. They understand the world in which they are raising their kids... They understand the strengths and weaknesses of their kids...
 2. Equipping parents, most importantly understand their kids are on lone from God and that the most significant task before them is having their kids know Christ, His Word and His Church.
 3. In stark contrast, the *transforming* parents forget that it is God Who does the transforming.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 3:6 “*I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.*”
 - b. transforming parents take on the wrong job assignment – rather than building temples with pillars of stability and strength, they build prisons.

- c. transforming parents produce a measure of short lived compliance but never the deep, consistent commitment that makes a child stable and secure in a topsy turvy world.
4. Kids bathed in the knowledge that there is a purpose for their lives and that God is leading them according to His plan become stable adults. They draw peace from knowing all things work together for the good to those who love and are intent upon doing God's will. Such stable, secure people go through hard times like everyone else, but they don't give up, because they know all is according to God's plan even if they themselves don't understand it!

Conclusion: In A.D. 155, Polycarp, the aged leader of the church at Smyrna, was dragged to a post where he would be burned all because of his service to Christ. He was given the opportunity to renounce the Lord. His reply is as follows: *“Eighty-six years I have served Him (Christ), and He has never done me wrong. How, then, should I be able to blaspheme my King who has saved me?”*

A less know fact is that Polycarp grew up in a home under equipper parents. They were led to Christ through Paul's ministry, and determined to raise their son as a man of God in the midst of a corrupt society. Rather than producing a child who would give only half-hearted, even resentful compliance, Polycarp's parents produced a man of such commitment he could be steady as a rock under the most severe threats and temptations. Polycarp parent's positioned their son so that God could transform and develop him. They equipped him with stability and strength. What are you doing with the kids God's has given you to influence?