

A young girl with blonde hair is shown from the back, wearing a yellow shirt. Her hair is styled in a braid with a blue scrunchie at the end. She is sitting at a table with various colored crayons scattered on it. The word "Parenthood" is written in a colorful, outlined font across the middle of the image.

Parenthood

Displaying God as Father

PARENTHOOD

Displaying God as Father

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This class presents a theology of parenthood while providing practical, biblical principles for Christians seeking to raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Among the issues we will consider together are the goals and purposes of parenthood, family worship and discipleship, formative and corrective discipline, unique challenges, and transitions. Whether you have children at home, on the way, or you simply want to grow in your knowledge of Christian parenting, join us for our study of parenthood.

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Parenthood

Lesson 1

God's Purpose for the Family: Common Perspectives and the Biblical Portrait¹

COMMON PERSPECTIVES ON CHILDREN TODAY

1. Obstacles
2. Idols
3. Tools

THE BIBLICAL PORTRAIT

Scripture teaches that a primary purpose of the family is to present the whole world with a series of three images—images of God himself, the gospel, and the church.

1. A Portrait of God's Own Nature

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth." 27 So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female. 28 God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth" (Gen. 1:26–28).

"It is as if God said, 'I created the first and original pair of human beings in my very image, and I could continue creating them unilaterally so that you would have no part to play. But instead, you are now to bring about human beings; you are to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth with my greatest of all creations, humans made in my very image'" (Bruce Ware, *Father, Son, & Holy Spirit*, 58).

¹ In addition to the resources cited, this course was developed in part from the "Parenthood" core seminar at Capitol Hill Baptist Church (Washington, D.C.), John Kimbell's "Biblical Parenting" class at Clifton Baptist Church (Louisville, KY), Randy Stinson's "Leadership and Family Ministry" class at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Louisville, KY), the "Biblical Family" class at Maranatha Bible Church (Comstock Park, MI), and Rick Anderson's "Parenting Helps" at Faith Community Church (Oxnard, CA).

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Lesson 1

2. A Portrait of the Gospel

“When the time came to completion, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba, Father!” 7 So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then God has made you an heir” (Gal. 4:4–7).

“If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God’s child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all” (J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, 201).

3. A Portrait of the Church

“I write these things to you, hoping to come to you soon. 15 But if I should be delayed, I have written so that you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:14–15).

“Don’t rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, 2 older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters with all purity” (1 Tim. 5:1–2).

“The designation ‘brother’ is so common in the epistles that it seems to be the predominant way in which the New Testament authors refer to the other Christians to whom they are writing. This indicates the strong consciousness they had of the nature of the church as the family of God” (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 741).

OBJECTION: WHAT ABOUT OUR SIN?

1. *Even in the midst of our various failures as a family to live up to God’s purposes, we still point to these realities.*
2. *The family is not the final or fundamental revelation about these matters. God’s Word is.*
3. *Although all families fall short of perfection, God is in the process of conforming believers into the image of his Son.*

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read “A Theology of the Home” by John Tweeddale at ligonier.org/learn/articles/theology-home

God's Design of the Family: The Biblical Family

INTRODUCTION

1. Where is our culture going? (secular/sociological worldview)
2. What does the Bible say? (Christian/theological worldview)

"This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24).

"The one who loves a father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; the one who loves a son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:36).

DEFINING THE BIBLICAL FAMILY

"God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents" (Article XVIII of the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, "The Family").

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Lesson 2

THE “IDEA” OF ROLES FOR THE FAMILY

“Although we’re far from done, social movements have allowed women to achieve a greater level of equality. However, not all marriages have partners who are on equal footing, and in some cases, that’s by choice. Couples generally fall into one of two camps: partners either lean towards the traditional perspective of male breadwinner/female homemaker, or hold the more contemporary view that men and women are equal and have shared responsibilities” (Rob Pascale and Lou Primavera, “How Do Gender Roles Impact Marriage?” *Psychology Today*, 1/7/2020).

1. What Roles Are Not

- a. Our society views roles and worth or equality as the same thing. This means they are not looking at the individual but what the individual does.

“The reality is couples who hold onto traditional gender roles are not as satisfied with their marriages as those who accept more contemporary roles. Modern thinking couples are sometimes referred to as androgynous, because the two partners share a number of personal traits. Both husbands and wives possess some degree of what might be considered masculine traits, such as means-ends problem solving, and feminine traits, such as emotional expressiveness.”

- b. Traditional husbands viewed as dominant.

“In the case of traditional marriages, both husbands and wives are comfortable with the idea that the husband is dominant. They have a set of expectations about how each partner should behave and they find their respective roles to be natural and even preferred. While they might admit to themselves that their relationship is many ways imbalanced, they are willing to live with things as they are because that’s how they see the way of the world. We should point out that these relationships are acceptable only if the husband is dominant. Neither partner likes the arrangement when the wife is dominant, possibly because this represents too extreme a departure from traditional male and female roles.”

- c. Traditional wives viewed as subordinate and unstable.

“It is common knowledge that when couples fight and eventually break up, they do so over seemingly trivial issues. Clearly, it’s not disagreements over the dinner menu or the remote control that lead a couple to divorce. It’s the disagreements over who is in charge and who isn’t, and the stress and disruption that come along with these disagreements. Couples with unresolved dominance may last for a while, maybe even forever, but their relationship is inherently unstable.”

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Lesson 2

2. What Roles Are

When the Bible speaks of roles, it goes far beyond what we **do** daily and gets into the heart of **who we are** in God's sight and **what is in our own hearts**.

THE BIBLICAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN A FAMILY

ROLES	RESPONSIBILITIES	SCRIPTURES
Husbands/Fathers	Love wife as Christ loved the church	Eph. 5:25–33; Col. 3:19; 1 Pet. 3:7
	Lead, protect, & provide for family/children	2 Cor. 12:14; 1 Tim. 5:8
	Ensure proper nurture and discipline	Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21; Heb. 12:6
Wives/Mothers	Help husband in submission, respect	Eph. 5:22–24; Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1–6
	Bear and raise children, motherhood	1 Tim. 2:15; Tit. 2:4–5
	Manage the home	1 Tim. 5:14
Children	Honor and obey parents	Eph. 6:1–3; Col. 3:20
	Love siblings; live at peace	Rom. 12:10, 18
	Care for parents in old age	1 Tim. 5:8

1. The Role of Husbands/Fathers

a. Husband to his wife

i. *Servant headship*

“The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of the body” (Eph. 5:23).

“Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him” (Gen. 2:18).

“It is your ruin, O Israel, that you are against Me, against your help” (Hos. 13:9, LSB).

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Lesson 2

ii. Sacrificial love

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her” (Eph. 5:25).

“Authentic love is incompatible with a despotic or domineering approach to headship. When Paul commanded husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church, he was in effect forbidding them to exercise severe or abusive authority over their wives. If the model of this love is Christ, who “did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28), then the husband who thinks he exists so his wife and children can serve him couldn’t be farther off the mark” (John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family*, 58).

- Christlike love is not something that is going to come naturally to him. It is something that he is going to have to work on and be very deliberate about.

“And some of you used to be like this. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11).

“So, you too consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:11).

- Christlike love is not merely a feeling or an involuntary attraction. It involves a willful choice.

“...when Paul commanded husbands to love their wives, he was calling for all the virtues outlined in 1 Corinthians 13, including patience, kindness, generosity, humility, meekness, thoughtfulness, liberality, gentleness, trust, goodness, truthfulness, and long-suffering. It is significant that all the properties of love stress selflessness and sacrifice. The husband who truly loves his wife simply cannot wield his authority over her like a club. Far from being overlord of the family, the godly husband and father must make himself servant of all” (John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family*, 59–60).

“But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

“But I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:3).

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b. Father to his children

“Fathers, don’t stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

“Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they won’t become discouraged” (Col. 3:21).

“We had human fathers discipline us, and we respected them. Shouldn’t we submit even more to the Father of spirits and live?” (Heb. 12:9).

“Anyone you forgive, I do too. For what I have forgiven—if I have forgiven anything—it is for your benefit in the presence of Christ, 11 so that we may not be taken advantage of by Satan. For we are not ignorant of his schemes” (2 Cor. 2:10–11).

“Be angry and do not sin. Don’t let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and don’t give the devil an opportunity” (Eph. 4:26–27).

“But if anyone does not provide for his own family, especially for his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Tim. 5:8).

2. The Role of Wives/Mothers

a. Helper to her husband

“In the same way, older women are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not slaves to excessive drinking. They are to teach what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands and to love their children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, workers at home, kind, and in submission to their husbands, so that God’s word will not be slandered” (Tit. 2:3–5).

- i. Young women need to be mentored by older women endowed with life experience and the skill and wisdom that come from years of practicing Christian virtues.
- ii. Love of husbands comes before love of children.
- iii. Wives are called both to love and to submit to their husbands.
- iv. Women need self-control in dealing with their husbands and children.
- v. Women’s hearts are to be pure, and their attitude toward others in the home is to be kind.
- vi. Women are to be devoted primarily to the home.
- vii. The desired result of proper wifely submission and diligent homemaking will be that no one will revile the Word of God.

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Lesson 2

b. Mother to her children

“But she will be saved through childbearing, if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with good sense” (1 Tim. 2:15).

“Therefore, I want younger women to marry, have children, manage their households, and give the adversary no opportunity to accuse us” (1 Tim. 5:14).

“There’s a beautiful equilibrium in the way God has designed the family to function. Husband and wife are one. Men may have the role and responsibility of spiritual headship, but in many ways, the woman has the most powerful and lasting influence in the lives of family members. [Speaking of 1 Timothy 2:11–15] What Paul meant is that women are saved from insignificance and frustration by their role in the home and the family. God has given them a powerful influence that equals and, in many ways, exceeds the impact of the husband’s headship” (D. Jones and A. Köstenberger, *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*, 110–111).

3. The Role of Children

“Fundamentally, children, like all people, ought to be considered spiritual individuals who are uniquely created by God and yet are fallen sinners, so that the task of parenting is not merely that of behavioral conditioning but spiritual nurture and training” (David W. Jones and Andreas J. Köstenberger, *God, Marriage, and Family*, 108).

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because this is right. 2 **Honor your father and mother**, which is the first commandment with a promise, 3 **so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land**” (Eph. 6:1–3).

“The parents’ authority provides a safe environment in which children can grow in all these ways. The children’s obedience is the fuel for all their learning and growth, and the better they learn to obey, the more proficiently they will grow in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and men” (John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family*, 96).

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read “Family Ministry: Where We’ve Been, Where We Are, and Where We Might Go” by Timothy Paul Jones at timothypauljones.com/family-ministry-weve-might-go/

The Ministry of the Family: The Church and the World

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FAMILY

Scripture teaches that a primary purpose of the family is nothing less presenting the whole world with a series of three portraits—of God’s triune nature, the gospel, and the church.

THE FAMILY MINISTERS TO THE LOCAL CHURCH

1. **A well-ordered family is a powerful, God-ordained, universal witness to the church of what it ought to be.**

“I write these things to you, hoping to come to you soon. 15 But if I should be delayed, I have written so that you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:14–15).

“[An overseer] must manage his own household competently and have his children under control with all dignity. 5 (If anyone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of God’s church?) (1 Tim. 3:4–5).

2. **A beautiful symbiosis: the family blesses the church, and the church blesses the family.**

“Because of the close relation between family and church, godly family life stimulates appreciation of God as our heavenly Father, and appreciation of God stimulates godly family life. Both are enhanced by the example of mature, fatherly [and motherly] leaders within the church . . . [the] disintegration of household order within the church adversely affects both our consciousness of being in God’s family and the quality of love within Christian families” (Vern Poythress, “The Church as Family,” *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood*, 245).

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Lesson 3

THE FAMILY MINISTERS TO THE WORLD

1. Preparation for the gospel

“When the time came to completion, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba, Father!” 7 So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then God has made you an heir” (Gal. 4:4–7).

2. Satan’s attack

- a. It seems he wants to disintegrate and distort the family beyond recognition so that the gospel is as inaccessible to people as possible.
- b. Example: gender interchangeability

3. Our view

We should view building strong families as a form of ministry and opening our homes to non-Christians as an increasingly valuable evangelistic opportunity.

- a. The significance of the home—and homemakers—in Scripture

“She watches over the activities of her household and is never idle. 28 Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also praises her: 29 “Many women have done noble deeds, but you surpass them all!” (Prov. 31:27–29).

“In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? 3 If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also. 4 You know the way to where I am going” (John 14:2–4).

“In the same way, older women are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not slaves to excessive drinking. They are to teach what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands and to love their children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, workers at home, kind, and in submission to their husbands, so that God’s word will not be slandered” (Titus 2:3–5).

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Lesson 3

b. The significance of the home in evangelism

“Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that when they slander you as evildoers, they will observe your good works and will glorify God on the day he visits” (1 Pet. 2:12).

“But I (not the Lord) say to the rest: If any brother has an unbelieving wife and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. 13 Also, if any woman has an unbelieving husband and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce her husband. 14 For the unbelieving husband is made holy by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy by the husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is they are holy. 15 But if the unbeliever leaves, let him leave. A brother or a sister is not bound in such cases. God has called you to live in peace. 16 Wife, for all you know, you might save your husband. Husband, for all you know, you might save your wife” (1 Cor. 7:12–16).

c. The ministry of having children

“Sons are indeed a heritage from the Lord, offspring, a reward. 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the sons born in one’s youth. 5 Happy is the man who has filled his quiver with them. They will never be put to shame when they speak with their enemies at the city gate” (Ps. 127:3–5).

“But from eternity to eternity the Lord’s faithful love is toward those who fear him, and his righteousness toward the grandchildren 18 of those who keep his covenant, who remember to observe his precepts” (Ps. 103:17–18).

“I recall your sincere faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and now, I am convinced, is in you also” (2 Tim. 1:5).

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read “Your Child’s Greatest Need” by John MacArthur at gty.org/library/articles/A359/your-childrens-greatest-need

The Goals of Parenting (Part 1): Shepherding the Heart

PARENTING SIMPLIFIED: BIBLICAL COMMANDS AND FALSE GUILT

1. Briefly summarized, the Bible's instructions warn parents not to rule their children harshly, but to raise them tenderly with fairness, firmness, & fondness. Parents should:

- a. Instruct their children in the way of the Lord.

"Fathers, don't stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4; cf. Col. 3:21; Deut. 6; Prov. 1–9)

- b. Not exasperate them (be loving, patient, kind).

"Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they won't become discouraged" (Col. 3:21; cf. Eph. 6:4)

- c. Discipline them when they disobey.

"Don't withhold discipline from a youth; if you punish him with a rod, he will not die. 14 Punish him with a rod, and you will rescue his life from Sheol" (Prov. 23:13–14).

"Endure suffering as discipline: God is dealing with you as sons. For what son is there that a father does not discipline? 8 But if you are without discipline—which all receive—then you are illegitimate children and not sons" (Heb. 12:7–8).

- d. Provide for their material needs.

"But if anyone does not provide for his own family, especially for his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim. 5:8).

- e. Be thankful for them; welcome them; cherish them (don't view them as an obstacle).

"Sons are indeed a heritage from the Lord, offspring, a reward. 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the sons born in one's youth. 5 Happy is the man who has filled his quiver with them" (Ps. 127:3–5).

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Lesson 4

2. The brief biblical directives guide parents in an extended process with their child:

- a. *a process of nurturing a relationship—a close friendship—with their child,*
- b. *a process beginning with a tight leash of parental control, a leash that lengthens and slackens as the child learns to exercise personal responsibility,*
- c. *a process requiring the parents to seek God 's grace to help and strengthen them to bring up their child, as they seek God's grace to save their child,*
- d. *a process of training the child to walk in the way of the Lord that leads to life rather than the way of the world and of sin that leads to death,*
- e. *a process to form the character of the child, so that the child, following Christ, may be useful to others in the world and prepared for the world to come,*
- f. *a process of parents bringing them up, careful to avoid exasperating and provoking them to anger.*

PARENTING COMPLEXITIES: BIBLICAL COMMANDS AND WISDOM

It is crucial that we distinguish a biblical **command and obligation** that comes to us as parents from the Scriptures from the **application** of that command which requires wisdom in particular circumstances and which may be applied in different ways in different families. Two ditches to avoid:

1. **Falling into legalism and false guilt.**
2. **Assuming wisdom has nothing to offer us.**

THE PARENTING TASK: SHEPHERDING THE HEART

1. **We are not simply trying to control a child's behavior but are continually focused on the orientation of our child's heart toward God and others.**

"Guard your heart above all else, for it is the source of life" (Prov. 4:23).

"For from within, out of people's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immoralities, thefts, murders, 22 adulteries, greed, evil actions, deceit, self-indulgence, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. 23 All these evil things come from within and defile a person" (Mark 7:21–23).

"A good person produces good out of the good stored up in his heart. An evil person produces evil out of the evil stored up in his heart, for his mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart" (Luke 6:45).

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Lesson 4

2. **We can appeal to sinful temptations or idols of their heart in order to achieve the behavior we want for our own convenience.**

- a. Bribery
- b. Emotionalism
- c. Punitive correction

SHAPING INFLUENCES AND HEART ORIENTATION

1. **We can't ultimately control the hearts of our children. We may be able to basically get our child to do what we want him or her to do. But we can't change his heart.**

"Start a youth out on his way; even when he grows old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6).

"The one who corrects a mocker will bring abuse on himself; the one who rebukes the wicked will get hurt. 8 Don't rebuke a mocker, or he will hate you; rebuke the wise, and he will love you. 9 Instruct the wise, and he will be wiser still; teach the righteous, and he will learn more. 10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" (Prov. 9:7–10).

2. **We can make two opposite mistakes in interacting with shaping influences** (Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, 15):

- a. Determinism—Viewing shaping influences deterministically
- b. Denial—Viewing a child as unaffected by his early childhood experience

3. **We are dependent on the sovereign grace of God.**

"For he tells Moses, I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16 So then, it does not depend on human will or effort but on God who shows mercy" (Rom. 9:15–16).

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read "The Most Solemn Mandate" by R. C. Sproul at ligonier.org/learn/articles/most-solemn-mandate
- Read "God Saves Kids" by Tedd Tripp at ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/god-saves-kids

The Goals of Parenting (Part 2): Being Benevolent Authorities

BIBLICAL REQUIREMENTS OF PARENTS TOWARD CHILDREN

1. Instruct in the ways of the Lord (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21; Deut. 6; Prov. 1–9)
2. Discipline when disobedient (Prov. 23:13–14; Heb. 12:7–8)
3. Provide for material needs (1 Tim. 5:8)
4. Don't exasperate (be loving, patient, kind) (Col. 3:21; Eph. 6:4)
5. Be thankful; welcome; cherish (don't view as obstacles) (Ps. 127:3–5a)

THE GOALS OF PARENTING

1. **Being benevolent authorities** (Parent's relationship to the child)

"Fathers, don't stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

a. A right perspective

- i. God is our authority.
- ii. You exercise authority as God's agent.

b. A right priority

- i. Singling out fathers
- ii. Sound fundamentals
 1. The fundamental of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone (Eph. 1:7; 2:5–9; 3:16–17).
 2. The fundamental of a growing maturity in grace (Eph. 4:14–24).
 3. The fundamental of a walk of love (Eph. 4:31–32; 5:1–2, 25, 28–29).
 4. The fundamental of a walk of light (Eph. 5:3–14).
 5. The fundamental of a walk of wisdom (Eph. 5:10, 15–17).
 6. The fundamental of depending upon God (Eph. 6:10).

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Lesson 5

c. A right purpose

“Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they won’t become discouraged” (Col. 3:21).

“Authority must have a friendly face. Authority must have a rewarding hand. If we forget friendship with our children, we forfeit authority. If we forfeit integrity, we forfeit authority” (Charles Spurgeon).

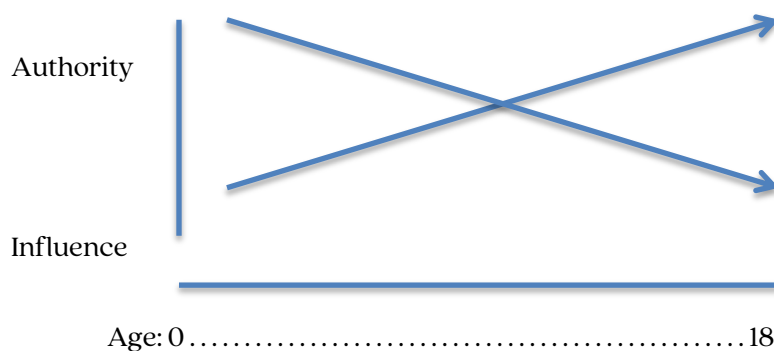
d. A right process

“Start a youth out on his way; even when he grows old he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6).

“We proclaim him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ” (Col. 1:28).

“My children, I am again suffering labor pains for you until Christ is formed in you” (Gal. 4:19).

AUTHORITY-INFLUENCE SCALE



“Authority” = what may be accomplished with your child because you are stronger, faster, larger, etc. (more formal)

“Influence” = the willingness of your child to place himself under your authority because he trusts you (less formal)

Parenthood

Lesson 5

2. **Shepherding children to understand themselves in God's world** (Parent's activity to child)

"The one who walks with the wise will become wise, but a companion of fools will suffer harm" (Prov. 13:20).

- a. Instructing a child in the ways of the Lord.
- b. Shaping a worldview.
- c. Speaking and living and sharing a worldview with our children.
- d. Consistently striving to push down to issues of the heart.

3. **Keeping the gospel in clear view**

THE DESIRED END: INTERNALIZATION OF THE GOSPEL

"My heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved" (Rom. 10:1).

"For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?" (Mark 8:36).

WORKING FROM BEHAVIOR TO THE HEART

"Counsel in a person's heart is deep water; but a person of understanding draws it out" (Prov. 20:5).

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezek. 36:26).

- a. We are NOT simply seeking to control or manage behavior; we are seeking to shepherd their hearts toward the Lord.
- b. Our goal is to work back from the behavior of our children and strive to understand what issues of the heart are being revealed by their behavior.
- c. By focusing on the heart, it does NOT mean behavior does not matter.
- d. When we deal at the level of the heart, our children come face-to-face with their inability to obey, and therefore their need for a Savior who can both forgive their sins and give them a new heart that is inclined to obey.

Parenthood

Lesson 5

- e. Scenarios
 - a. Infant who refuses to lay still while changing his diaper.
 - b. Conflict between siblings over a toy.
 - c. Competition that turns unfriendly.
 - d. Throwing cards from a board game all over the room.
 - e. Come up with friends and publicly asking if you can go out to eat.

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read “5 Reasons You Should Prioritize Family Worship” by Donald Whitney at thegospelcoalition.org/article/5-reasons-you-should-prioritize-family-worship/
- Read “Leading Family Devotions” by Sally Michael at truth78.org/blog/post/leading-family-devotions
- Read “Teach Your Kids a Catechism. Here’s Why” by Jeff Robinson at equip.sbts.edu/article/teach-kids-catechism-heres/

Formative Discipline (Part 1): Family Worship

WHAT IS WORSHIP?

The essential concept in Scripture is service to God, with an attitude of fear and adoring awe and wonder.

“Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship” (Rom. 12:1).

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT FAMILY WORSHIP?

1. Where?

“This is the command—the statutes and ordinances—the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, so that you may follow them in the land you are about to enter and possess. 2 Do this so that you may fear the Lord your God all the days of your life by keeping all his statutes and commands I am giving you, your son, and your grandson, and so that you may have a long life” (Deut. 6:1–2).

2. How?

“These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. 7 Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. 9 Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your city gates” (Deut. 6:6–9).

We learn from these passages that God’s will for his people is that they and their children worship him, meaning that they serve him with every fiber of their being, in an attitude of awe and love, and that this requires his word to be upon parents’ hearts so they impress these commands on their children everywhere they go, during every part of the day.

Parenthood

Lesson 6

FAMILY WORSHIP REQUIRES DAILY TEACHING

1. Formal daily teaching can be wise.

“[B]ringing up children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord is not accomplished unintentionally and incidentally. Yes, it should and will happen throughout the day at unplanned, serendipitous occasions, but it should also happen purposefully. Without some regularity and structure and purpose, it is one of those things that we assume we are doing but never actually do. Consistent, father-led family worship is one of the best, steadiest, and most easily measurable ways to bring up children in the Lord’s discipline and instruction” (Donald Whitney, *Family Worship: In the Bible, in History, and In Your Home*, 7).

a. First Christians

“At an early hour in the morning the family was assembled and a portion of Scripture was read from the Old Testament, which was followed by a hymn and a prayer In the evening, before retiring to rest, the family again assembled, the same form of worship was observed . . . with this difference, that the service was considerably protracted beyond the period which could be conveniently allotted to it in the commencement of the day” (Donald Whitney, *Family Worship*, 9).

b. Martin Luther

He believed each family could be a house of prayer and a school for Christ. He said, “Such a house is actually a school and a church, and the head of the household is a bishop and priest in his house” (Donald Whitney, *Family Worship*, 30).

c. The Puritans

“The Puritans crusaded for a high view of the family, proclaiming it both the basic unit of society and a little church in itself, with the husband as its pastor and his wife as his assistant . . . It was the husband’s responsibility to channel the family into religion; to take them to church on the Lord’s Day, and oversee the sanctifying of that entire day in the home; to catechize the children, and teach them the faith; to examine the whole family after each sermon, to see how much had been retained and understood, and to fill any gaps in understanding that might remain; to lead the family in worship daily, ideally twice a day; and to set an example of sober godliness at all times and in all matters. To this end he must be willing to take time out to learn the faith that he is charged to teach” (J. I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life*, 270).

Parenthood

Lesson 6

d. Second London Baptist Confession of 1689

“God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth; as in private families daily, and in secret each one by himself” (22.6).

e. Matthew Henry

“If our houses be houses of the Lord, we shall for that reason love home, reckoning our daily devotion the sweetest of our daily delights; and our family-worship the most valuable of our daily comforts A church in the house will be a good legacy, nay, it will be a good inheritance, to be left to your children after you” (Donald Whitney, *Family Worship*, 11). Regarding family worship he said, “Here the reformation must begin.”

“All agree that masters of families who profess religion, and the fear of God themselves, should, according to the talents they are entrusted with, maintain and keep up religion and the fear of God in their families, ‘as those who must give account’” (Matthew Henry, *Family Religion: Principles for Raising a Godly Family*, 29).

f. Spurgeon

“If we want to bring up a godly family, who shall be a seed to serve God when our heads are under the clods of the valley, let us train them up in the fear of God by meeting together as a family for worship” (Donald Whitney, *Family Worship*, 13).

“I trust there are none here present, who profess to be followers of Christ who do not also practice prayer [i.e., family devotions] in their families. We may have no positive command for it, but we believe that it is so much in accord with the genius and spirit of the gospel, and that it is so commended by the example of the saints, that the neglect thereof is a strange inconsistency” (Donald Whitney, *Family Worship*, 3).

2. What should a family teaching-worship service be like?

a. Spurgeon

“I agree with Matthew Henry when he says, ‘They that pray in the family do well; they that pray and read the Scriptures do better; but they that pray, and read, and sing do best of all.’ There is a completeness in that kind of family worship which is much to be desired” (Donald Whitney, *Family Worship*, 18).

Parenthood

Lesson 6

b. Bible reading

- i. Be age-appropriate.
- ii. Use Bible storybook for very young children.
- iii. Explain tough words or concepts.
- iv. Ask questions.

c. Prayer

- i. Pray the passage
- ii. Pray ACTS prayers (adoration/praise, confession, thanksgiving, supplication)
- iii. Pray for personal salvation, holiness, and needs; family; church; world

John Paton: “How much my father’s prayers [when John left home] impressed me I can never explain, nor could any stranger understand. When, on his knees and all of us kneeling around him in Family Worship, he poured out his soul with tears for the conversion of the Heathen World to the service of Jesus, and for every personal and domestic need, we all felt as if in the presence of the living Saviour, and learned to know and love Him as our Divine Friend. As we rose from our knees, I used to look at the light on my father’s face, and wish I were like him in spirit—hoping that, in answer to his prayers, I might be privileged and prepared to carry the blessed Gospel to some portion of the Heathen World” (Donald Whitney, *Family Worship*, 25).

d. Singing

- i. Consider using hymnals and song sheets.
- ii. Choose songs related to the passage.
- iii. Commit to learning a hymn of the week/month.

e. Overall keys: brevity, regularity, and flexibility

3. Daily teaching certainly must be informal.

- a. God’s word is to be our constant subject of conversation (Deut. 6:6–9).
- b. It is not easy to keep God’s word as our constant subject of conversation, so we need reminders.
- c. If God’s word is to be our constant subject of conversation, we need to be together so that we can have those conversations.

Parenthood

Lesson 6

FAMILY WORSHIP REQUIRES OUR OWN RADICAL CHANGE

1. **Teaching our children God's word 24/7, to train our children to have hearts that long for awe-inspired service toward God, is only truly done when we are simply passing on what is already overflowing in our own hearts.**

"Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts" (Col. 3:16).

2. Example of Timothy

"I recall your sincere faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and now, I am convinced, is in you also" (2 Tim. 1:5).

"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed. You know those who taught you, 15 and you know that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:14–15).

3. Parents as sponges

"Get masters of families to do their duty, and they will not only spare you a great deal of labor, but will much further the success of your labors . . . You are not likely to see any general reformation, till you procure family reformation" (Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor*, 93).

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read "Ways Parents Provoke" by John MacArthur at gty.org/library/articles/A325/ways-parents-provoke

Formative Discipline (Part 2): Communication

INTRODUCTION: COMMUNICATION & THE ROD WORKING TOGETHER

“Don’t withhold discipline from a youth; if you punish him with a rod, he will not die. 14 Punish him with a rod, and you will rescue his life from Sheol. 15 My son, if your heart is wise, my heart will indeed rejoice. 16 My innermost being will celebrate when your lips say what is right. 17 Don’t let your heart envy sinners; instead, always fear the Lord. 18 For then you will have a future, and your hope will not be dashed. 19 Listen, my son, and be wise; keep your mind on the right course” (Prov. 23:13–19).

WHY DO WE COMMUNICATE?

1. **We image God when we communicate with our children.**

2. **We are commanded by God to communicate with our children.**

“Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deut. 6:7).

“Fathers, don’t stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

What is at stake?

“That whole generation was also gathered to their ancestors. After them another generation rose up who did not know the Lord or the works he had done for Israel. 11 The Israelites did what was evil in the Lord’s sight. They worshiped the Baals 12 and abandoned the Lord, the God of their ancestors . . .” (Judg. 2:10–12).

We communicate so that our children may know the Lord and what he has done for us in Christ – and in so doing LIVE!

Parenthood

Lesson 7

WHAT DO WE COMMUNICATE?

We are called to train our children in the whole counsel of God, which focuses on the gospel of Jesus Christ.

“You pore over the Scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them, and yet they testify about me” (John 5:39).

“One could accurately say, then, that parents who want to be thorough in evangelizing their children need to teach them *the whole counsel of God*, taking care to show the gospel ramifications in all that truth” (John MacArthur, *What the Bible Says About Parenting*, 52).

“The call to formative instruction is a call to provide our children with a [biblical] grid for interpreting and responding to reality” (Tedd and Margy Tripp, *Instructing a Child’s Heart*, 31).

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16–17).

HOW SHOULD WE NOT COMMUNICATE?

“Fathers, don’t stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

“Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they won’t become discouraged” (Col. 3:21).

1. **Beware of habitual harshness and severity.**
2. **Beware of unreasonable and unrealistic expectations.**
3. **Beware of hypocrisy.**
4. **Beware of neglect and indifference.**
5. **Beware of partiality and favoritism.**
6. **Beware of excessive rules and overprotection.**

Parenthood

Lesson 7

HOW DO WE COMMUNICATE?

“And we exhort you, brothers and sisters: warn those who are idle, comfort the discouraged, help the weak, be patient with everyone” (1 Thess. 5:14).

1. Rules

2. Correction

3. Discipline

4. Question-asking

5. Instruction

- a. What is instruction?
- b. What is the parent to instruct?
- c. How should the parents instruct?
- d. What is required of a parent to become a good instructor?

6. Encouragement

7. Warning

8. Rebuke

Parenthood

Lesson 7

9. Entreaty

10. Forgiveness

WHAT RESOURCES DO WE HAVE AS WE COMMUNICATE?

1. The indwelling Holy Spirit

2. A faithful marriage

“This is another thing you do. You are covering the Lord’s altar with tears, with weeping and groaning, because he no longer respects your offerings or receives them gladly from your hands. 14 And you ask, “Why?” Because even though the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, you have acted treacherously against her. She was your marriage partner and your wife by covenant. 15 Didn’t God make them one and give them a portion of spirit? What is the one seeking? Godly offspring. So watch yourselves carefully, so that no one acts treacherously against the wife of his youth. 16 “If he hates and divorces his wife,” says the Lord God of Israel, “he covers his garment with injustice,” says the Lord of Armies. Therefore, watch yourselves carefully, and do not act treacherously” (Mal. 2:13–16).

3. Natural affection

4. Intercessory prayer

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read “Parents, Require Obedience of Your Children” by John Piper at desiringgod.org/articles/parents-require-obedience-of-your-children

Formative Discipline (Part 3): Obedience

BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

“I will always obey your instruction, forever and ever. 45 I will walk freely in an open place because I study your precepts” (Ps. 119:44–45).

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because this is right. 2 **Honor your father and mother**, which is the first commandment with a promise, 3 **so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land**” (Eph. 6:1–3; cf. Rom. 1:30; 2 Tim. 3:2).

THE DEFINITION OF OBEDIENCE

1. **Obedience is the willing submission of one person to the authority of another.**
2. **For the child, obedience is more than just doing what he is told. It means doing what he is told . . .**
 - a. Without dispute, challenge, or excuse
 - b. Without delay
 - c. Without disgust, grumbling, or an attitude

“All the way, right away, with a happy heart.”

Parenthood

Lesson 8

TEACHING OBEDIENCE FROM THE PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

1. *A Call to Consistency*
2. *A Call to the Same Standard*
3. *A Call to Training*
4. *A Call to Encouragement*
5. *A Call to Discernment*
6. *A Call to Graciousness*

PARTING THOUGHTS

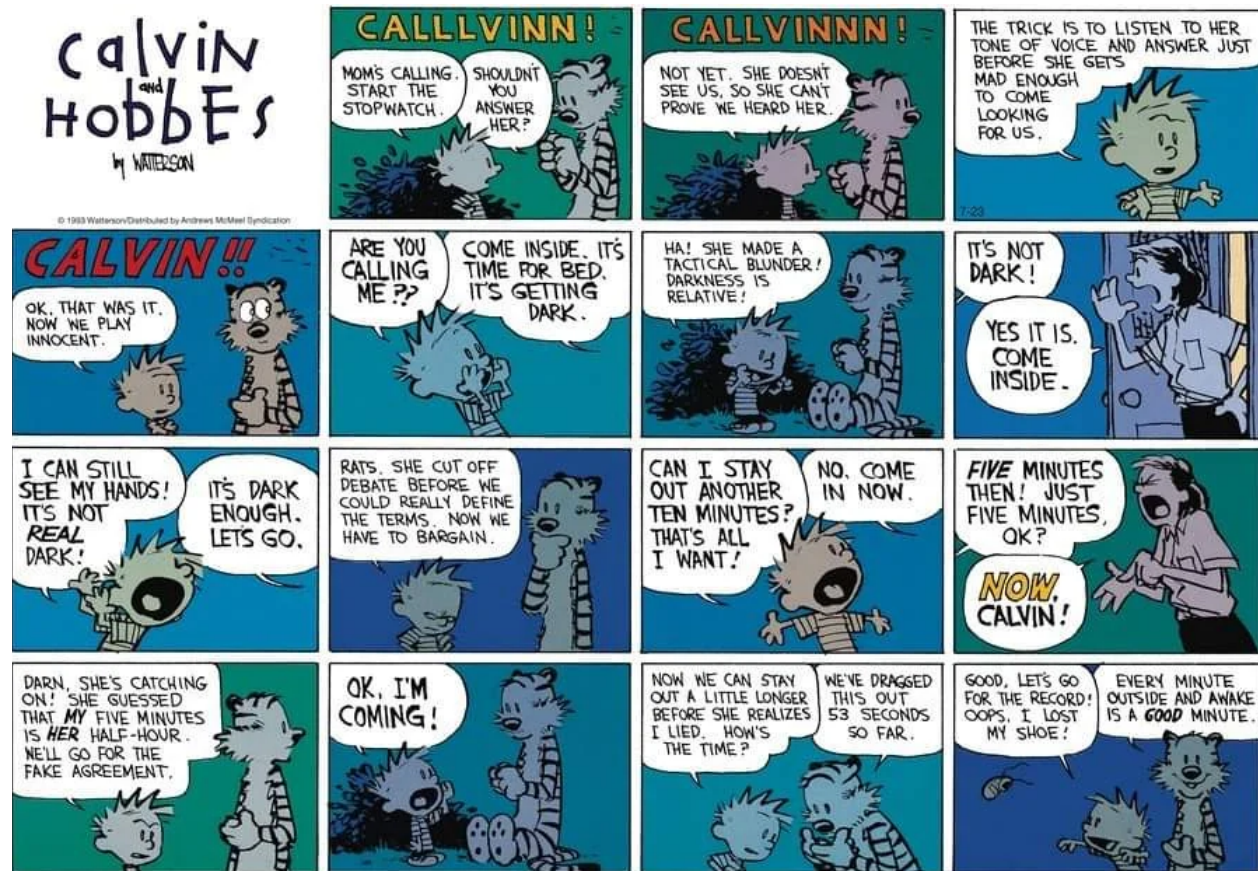
1. **We want our children to live under gracious, godly authority. This is a great service and blessing to them!**
2. **Two dangers to avoid:**
 - a. Legalistic
 - b. Licentious

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read "A Dual Responsibility" at ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/dual-responsibility
- Read "Why Parents Use the Rod of Correction" by Daryl Wingerd at bulletininserts.org/why-parents-use-the-rod-of-correction/

Parenthood

Lesson 8



Corrective Discipline (Part 1): The Rod

“TWELVE RULES FOR RAISING DELINQUENT CHILDREN”

1. Begin in infancy to give the child everything he wants, so that he will come to believe that the world owes him a living.
2. When he picks up bad words, laugh at him to make him think that it is cute. In this way he will pick up “cuter phrases” that will blow the top off your head later.
3. Never give him spiritual training. Wait until he’s 21, and let him “decide for himself.”
4. Avoid the use of the word “wrong.” He may develop a guilt complex. Then, if he is later arrested for stealing a car, he will believe that society is against him.
5. Pick up after him—books, shoes and dirty clothes. Do everything for him, so that he will be used to throwing all the responsibility on others.
6. Let him read or look at anything he wants. Oh, make certain that his utensils and drinking glass are sterilized and that his food is all organically grown, free from hormones and antibiotics; but let his mind feed on whatever garbage he finds.
7. Quarrel frequently in the children’s presence, so they are not too shocked when the marriage breaks up.
8. Give him all the money he wants. Never let him earn his own. Why should he have things as tough as you had them?
9. Satisfy his every appetite for food and comfort. See that every sensual desire is gratified. Denial may lead to harmful frustration.
10. Take his side in any dispute with policemen, teachers, and neighbors, since they are prejudiced against your child.
11. When he gets in real trouble later, use the excuse, “I could never do anything with him.”
12. Prepare for a life of grief. You will be apt to have one.

Parenthood

Lesson 9

THE NATURE AND NURTURE OF CHILDREN

1. Each child is an image-bearer of God.

“For it was you who created my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. 14 I will praise you because I have been remarkably and wondrously made” (Ps. 139:13–14).

2. Each child is a gift of the Lord.

“Sons are indeed a heritage from the Lord, offspring, a reward. 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the sons born in one’s youth. 5 Happy is the man who has filled his quiver with them. They will never be put to shame when they speak with their enemies at the city gate” (Ps. 127:3–5).

3. Each child comes into the world fallen in Adam.

“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all people, because all sinned” (Rom. 5:12).

“Indeed, I was guilty when I was born; I was sinful when my mother conceived me” (Ps. 51:5).

4. Each child is a developing creature.

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people” (Luke 2:52).

WHY THE ROD?

“Foolishness is bound to the heart of a youth; a rod of discipline will separate it from him” (Prov. 22:15).

“Don’t withhold discipline from a youth; if you punish him with a rod, he will not die. 14 Punish him with a rod, and you will rescue his life from Sheol” (Prov. 23:13–14).

“A rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a youth left to himself is a disgrace to his mother . . . 17 Discipline your child, and it will bring you peace of mind and give you delight” (Prov. 29:15, 17).

Parenthood

Lesson 9

WHAT IS THE ROD?

“The rod is a parent, in faith toward God and faithfulness toward his or her children, undertaking the responsibility of careful, timely, measured, and controlled use of physical punishment to underscore the importance of obeying God, thus rescuing the child from continuing in his foolishness until death” (Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, 104).

1. **A parental exercise**
2. **An act of faith**
3. **An act of faithfulness**
4. **A responsibility**
5. **A measured use of physical punishment**
6. **A rescue mission**

HOW DO I USE THE ROD?

1. Take your child to a place where you can have privacy.
2. Tell him specifically what he has done or failed to do.
3. Secure an acknowledgment from the child of what he has done.
4. Explain that you need to spank the child in obedience to God.
5. Apply the rod.
6. Lead child in asking forgiveness from you and from God (and later from others offended if necessary).
7. Clearly communicate that you forgive the child and are now reconciled with the child, and that God promises the same for all who turn from their sins and trust Jesus to save them.

Parenthood

Lesson 9

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

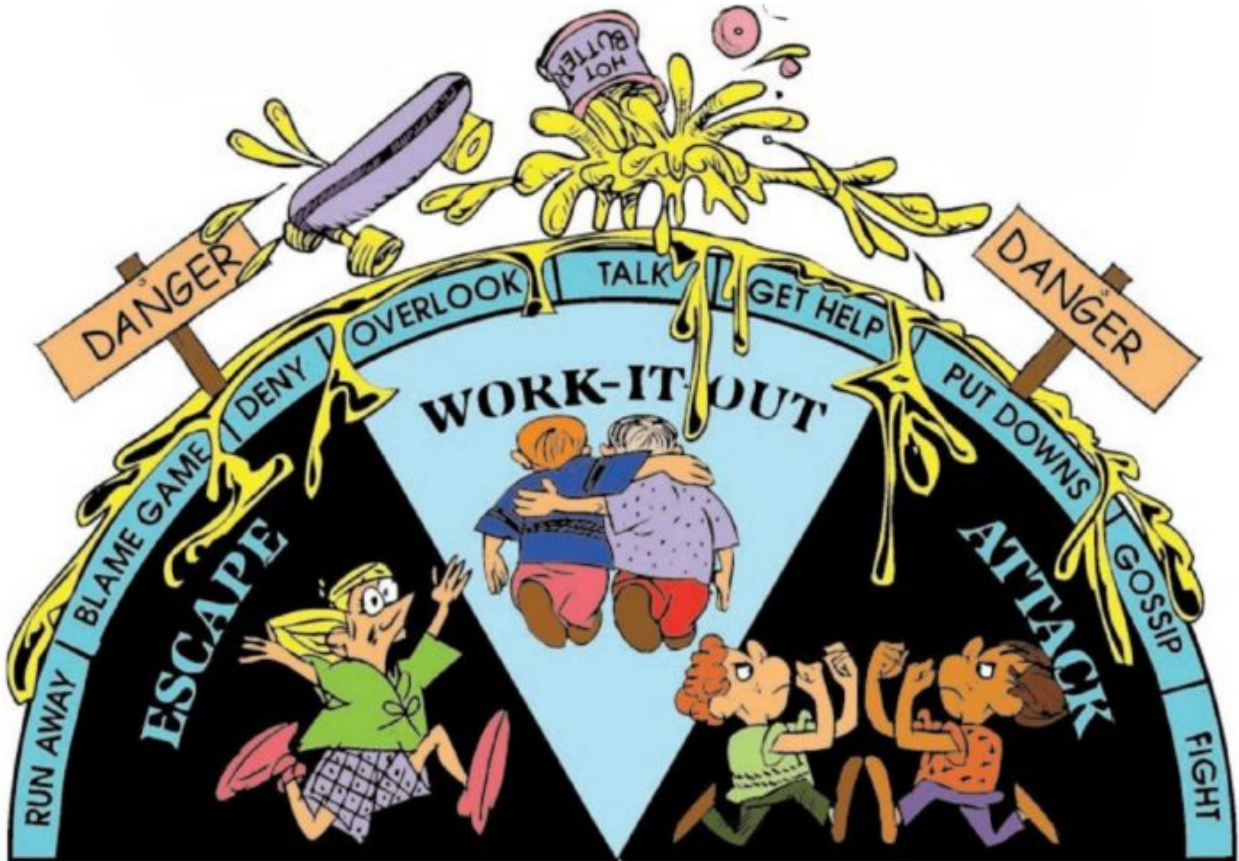
1. When is my child old enough?
2. When is a child too old?
3. I'm afraid I will hurt my child!
4. Won't this make him rebellious and angry?
5. Can I use time-out instead of spanking?
6. What if my child says, "But I didn't hear you?"
7. If I follow your counsel, all I'll do is spank.
8. Spanking is not working!
9. What if I'm too mad?
10. What if we're not at home?
11. I'm trying to get out the door to make a doctor's appointment or be on time for church and my child disobeys me, do I discipline and show up late?

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read "Teach Your Children to Resolve Conflict" by Chris Pennington at growingfathers.com/teach-your-children-to-resolve-conflict/

Corrective Discipline (Part 2): Conflict Resolution

THE SLIPPERY SLOPE: HOW DO CHILDREN DEAL WITH CONFLICT?



1. Escape Responses (Peace-Faking)

The escape responses are used to get away from conflict instead of trying to resolve it. They often prolong conflict and can result in bitterness and unforgiveness.

Denial—Pretending that a conflict does not exist, or refusing to do what we can to work it out, is always a wrong response to conflict.

Blame Game—Instead of taking responsibility for our choices, we try to escape their consequences by blaming others for the problem, pretending we did nothing wrong, covering up what we did, or lying about our contribution to a conflict. This is never a responsible way to handle conflict, nor does it resolve problems.

Run Away—Running away from the person we are quarreling with is only acceptable if there is danger of harm. Otherwise, this response does not solve problems.

Parenthood

Lesson 10

2. Attack Responses (Peace-Breaking)

The attack responses are used to put pressure on others to get our own way. These responses usually damage relationships and often result in anger and hatred.

Put Downs—We attack others with harsh and cruel words when conflict arises. This response usually stirs up anger in the other person, and is always a wrong response to conflict.

Gossip—We talk about people behind their backs in order to damage their reputation or to get others on our side. Gossip is hurtful and is always a wrong response to conflict.

Fight—We use physical force to get our own way. This is almost always a wrong response to conflict. (This response is proper only if you have to protect yourself or another person from being injured by an attacker.)

3. Work-It-Out Responses (Peace-Making)

The work-it-out responses are found at the top of the curve. These responses usually lead to constructive solutions to conflicts and help to preserve relationships.

Overlook an Offense—You deal with the offense *by yourself*. You simply *decide to forgive* a wrong action against you and walk away from a conflict. This is not the same as denial, as forgiveness is the key here. The person who overlooks another's offenses will continue to have a growing healthy relationship with him or her (Prov. 12:16; 17:14; 19:11; Col. 3:13; 1 Pet. 4:8).

Talk It Out—A conflict is resolved by going directly to the other person to *talk it out together*. This can include confessing your own wrongs and confronting the other person's wrongs in a kind and respectful way. This response should be used if you cannot overlook what the other person did, and the problem is hurting your relationship (Matt. 5:23–24; 18:15; Gal. 6:1–3).

Get Help—The third way to resolve a conflict is to get help from others.

- Get Help to Know What You Should Say—This is called *coaching* (Prov. 15:1; Eph. 4:29).
- Get Help to Talk Together—This is called *mediation* (Matt. 18:16).
- Get Help to Decide—This is called *arbitration* (1 Cor. 6:1–8; Exod. 18:13–27).

Parenthood

Lesson 10

WHY DO OUR CHILDREN HAVE CONFLICT?

“What is the source of wars and fights among you? Don’t they come from your passions that wage war within you? 2 You desire and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and wage war. You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and don’t receive because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures” (Jas. 4:1–3).

Principle: *Conflict starts in the heart. Sinful conflicts among you come from sinful cravings within you.*

1. **I Desire**
2. **I Demand**
3. **I Judge**
4. **I Punish**

“So to sum up, outer quarrels among Christians come from losing battles within. Once again James takes an inside view of man. James does this, as before when dealing with temptation, to expose the dynamic at work so that you will know where to aim your efforts to rectify the situation. It is within that the first and foremost change must begin. One must realize his sin, confess it and seek God’s forgiveness (and the forgiveness of those he has offended) and then, after reconciliation, begin to put on the new, biblical, righteous ways outlined in the Scriptures” (Jay Adams, *Hebrews, James, I & II Peter, and Jude*, The Christian Counselor’s Commentary, 201).

“Love, fear, trust – these are words of worship! Jesus commands us to love God, fear God, and trust God alone (Matthew 22:37; Luke 12:4–5, John 14:1). Any time we long for something apart from God, fear something more than God, or trust in something other than God to make us happy, fulfilled, or secure, we are engaging in the worship of false gods. As a result, we deserve the judgment and wrath of the true God” (Ken Sande, *Peacemaking for Families*, 25).

“They themselves report what kind of reception we had from you: how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath” (1 Thess. 1:9–10).

“Sin is what you do when you are not fully satisfied in God” (John Piper).

Parenthood

Lesson 10

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES DOES CONFLICT PROVIDE OUR CHILDREN?

1. Glorify God

- a. Trust God (Ps. 28:7)
- b. Obey God (John 14:15)
- c. Imitate God (Eph. 5:1–2)

2. Serve Other People

“But I say to you who listen: Love your enemies, do what is good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you” (Luke 6:27–28).

- a. Love
- b. Do Good
- c. Bless
- d. Pray

3. Grow to be More Like Christ

- a. Recognize Your Need for God (2 Cor. 12:9–10)
- b. Confess Your Sin (1 John 1:9)
- c. Practice New Attitudes and Actions (1 Cor. 4:13; Gal. 5:22–33; 1 Pet. 2:21–24).

HOW CAN OUR CHILDREN RESOLVE CONFLICT AND MAKE PEACE?

1. Confrontation

“Therefore, putting away lying, speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, because we are members of one another. 26 Be angry and do not sin. Don’t let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and don’t give the devil an opportunity. 28 Let the thief no longer steal. Instead, he is to do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need. 29 No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear. 30 And don’t grieve God’s Holy Spirit. You were sealed by him for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, anger and wrath, shouting and slander be removed from you, along with all malice. 32 And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ” (Eph. 4:25–32).

- a. Be Honest (v. 25)
- b. Keep Current (vv. 26–27)
- c. Attack the Problem, Not the Person (v. 29)
- d. Act, Don’t React (vv. 30–32)

Parenthood

Lesson 10

2. Confession and Repentance

“The one who conceals his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them will find mercy” (Prov. 28:13).

The Five A’s of Confession:

- **Admit** specifically what you did wrong (Both attitudes and actions)
- **Apologize** for how your choice hurt the other person (Express sorrow for causing pain)
- **Accept** the consequences (Such as making restitution)
- **Ask** for forgiveness (Seek forgiveness from God and the people you sinned against)
- **Alter** your choice in the future (Change your attitudes and actions)

3. Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Four False Ideas About Forgiveness

- “You need to FEEL like forgiving before you can really forgive.”
- “Forgiveness means FORGETTING about what someone did that hurt you.”
- “Forgiveness EXCUSES the other person’s sin.”
- “Forgiveness depends on getting a GUARANTEE that someone won’t do the same wrong thing again.”

Four “I Forgive You” Promises:

- I promise I will think good thoughts about you and do good to you.
- I promise I will not bring up this situation and use it against you.
- I promise I will not talk to others about what you did.
- I promise I will be friends with you again.

These promises may be summarized in a poem that is so easy a four-year old can memorize it:

- Good thought
- Hurt you not
- Gossip never
- Friends forever

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read “Raising Future Men and Women” by Randy Stinson at equip.sbts.edu/article/raising-future-men-and-women/

Gender in the Home (Part 1): Boys and Fatherhood

INTRODUCTION

1. Does the sex of our children, or our sex as parents, make any difference in the substance of our parenting?
2. Not focusing on description, but prescription—God's purpose in making boys and girls

WHAT IS GOD'S BIG PICTURE ON GENDER?

1. God intends to display his image differently through men and women, who are created equally in that image.
2. Men and women are not interchangeable. Instead, the biblical idea is that they complement one another.
3. Complementarity is shown in godly headship and submission in marriage, but it is also fleshed out in men's and women's relationships generally.

Parenthood

Lesson 11

WHAT IS BIBLICAL MANHOOD, AND HOW DO WE TEACH IT?

“At the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for, and protect women in ways appropriate to a man’s differing relationships” (John Piper, “A Vision of Biblical Complementarity,” *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 29).

1. “Mature Masculinity”

- a. Sons
- b. Fathers

2. “A Sense”

- a. Sons
- b. Fathers

3. “Benevolent Responsibility”

- a. Sons
- b. Fathers

4. “To Lead”

Leadership involves service and sacrifice.

Leadership does not presume superiority, but cultivates and mobilizes the strengths of others.

Leadership does not have to initiate every action, but feels the responsibility to provide a general pattern of initiative.

- a. Sons
- b. Fathers

5. “To Provide”

- a. Sons
- b. Fathers

6. “To Protect”

- a. Sons
- b. Fathers

Parenthood

Lesson 11

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

“Fathers, don’t stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

1. Embody Manhood

2. Instruct on manhood

3. Rehearse manhood

4. Inspire manhood

“What we have to do is make Christianity attractive . . . [and to show] that there is nothing in life comparable to being a Christian. We should create in them a desire to be like us . . . They should be saying to themselves, “I long to be as old as they are, so that I can enjoy it as they obviously do.” Our method must never be mechanical, legal, repressive. Our testimony must never be forced, but in all we are and do and say, let them know that we ourselves are bond-slaves of Jesus Christ, that God in His grace has opened our eyes and awakened us to the world, and that our greatest desire for them is to enter the same knowledge and have the same joy and have the highest privilege in the world, that of serving the Lord and living to the praise of the glory of His grace” (D. Martin Lloyd-Jones).

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read “Training Our Kids in a Culture That Affirms Transgenderism” by Denny Burk at www.crossway.org/articles/training-our-kids-in-a-culture-that-affirms-transgenderism/

Gender in the Home (Part 2): Girls and Motherhood

INTRODUCTION

1. The world's vision of the "warrior woman"
2. God's plan for women in their roles as mothers and daughters

BIBLICAL FOOTING

1. Big picture on gender – equal but not interchangeable

"We must and do deplore the stereotypes that caricature the divine distinctions [between men and women]. We deplore the abuses perpetrated by men against women . . . but have we forgotten the archetypes? Stereotype is a word generally used disparagingly to denote a fixed or conventional notion or pattern. An archetype is the original pattern or model . . . I am not here to defend stereotypes of femininity, but to try to focus on the Original Pattern.

The first woman was made specifically for the first man, a helper, to meet, respond to, surrender to, and complement him. . . . But Eve, in her refusal to accept the will of God, refused her femininity. Adam, in his capitulation to her suggestion, abdicated his masculine responsibility for her. It was the first instance of what we would recognize now as "role reversal." This definite disobedience ruined the original pattern and things have been in an awful mess ever since . . .

The world looks for happiness through self-assertion. The Christian knows that joy is found in self-abandonment" (Elisabeth Elliot, "The Essence of Femininity: A Personal Perspective," *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 403–404).

2. The sufficiency of Scripture

Parenthood

Lesson 12

WHAT IS BIBLICAL WOMANHOOD, AND HOW DO WE TEACH IT?

“At the heart of mature femininity is a freeing disposition to affirm, receive and nurture strength and leadership from worthy men in ways appropriate to women’s differing relationships” (John Piper, “A Vision of Biblical Complementarity,” *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 29).

1. Mothers must model these things

- a. Study to understand and embrace
- b. Set an example

2. But to modeling add:

- a. Instruction

“In the same way, older women are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not slaves to excessive drinking. They are to teach what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands and to love their children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, workers at home, kind, and in submission to their husbands, so that God’s word will not be slandered” (Titus 2:3–5).

- b. Prayers

- c. Training

- i. Purity

“Also, the women are to dress themselves in modest clothing, with decency and good sense, not with elaborate hairstyles, gold, pearls, or expensive apparel, 10 but with good works, as is proper for women who profess to worship God” (1 Tim. 2:9–10).

Parenthood

Lesson 12

ii. Kindness

“In the same way, wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, even if some disobey the word, they may be won over without a word by the way their wives live 2 when they observe your pure, reverent lives. 3 Don’t let your beauty consist of outward things like elaborate hairstyles and wearing gold jewelry or fine clothes, 4 but rather what is inside the heart—the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight” (1 Pet. 3:1–4).

d. Love

- i. Pray
- ii. Take an interest
- iii. Listen closely
- iv. Encourage, encourage, encourage
- v. Express affection
- vi. Make memories

3. Biblical femininity is “a freeing disposition”

- a. Mothers
- b. Daughters

4. Biblical femininity affirms and receives strength and leadership from worthy men

“A mature woman is glad when a respectful, caring, upright man offers sensitive strength and provides a pattern of appropriate initiatives in their relationship. She does not want to reverse these roles. She is glad when he is not passive. She feels herself enhanced and honored and freed by his caring strength and servant-leadership” (John Piper, “A Vision of Biblical Complementarity,” *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 40).

- a. Mothers
- b. Daughters

Parenthood

Lesson 12

5. Biblical femininity nurtures (a woman's noble role as "helper")

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him" (Gen. 2:18).

A helper to her husband (Ps. 127; 1 Tim. 2:15; 5:14; Tit. 2:5)

A helper to her church (Tit. 3:14)

A helper to the world (Prov. 31).

a. Mothers

b. Daughters

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read "The Family: Together in God's Presence" by John & Noel Piper at desiringgod.org/articles/the-family-together-in-gods-presence

Infancy to Childhood (0–5 Years Old)

INTRODUCTION: “PHASES OF PARENTHOOD”

1. Review

- a. Christianity is inherently familial
- b. We want our relationships with our children to image for the world our relationship with God
- c. Our goals for our children
 - i. Ages 0–5 – training them to be people under authority
 - ii. Ages 6–12 – helping them grow in character
- d. How we often instinctively attempt this
- e. Why this approach falls short

2. Preview

- a. Lots of what we will be talking about over the next few weeks is in the area of wisdom.
- b. You must be unified in parenting goals and decisions.
- c. Call to men!
- d. Call to women!
- e. Be committed to biblical parenting—with room for grace and wisdom.

SCHEDULING

1. Eating

2. Sleeping

Parenthood

Lesson 13

BENEVOLENT AUTHORITY

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because this is right. 2 **Honor your father and mother**, which is the first commandment with a promise, 3 **so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land**” (Eph. 6:1–3).

Equilibrium and Disequilibrium

FAMILY WORSHIP

1. General Thoughts
2. Bible
3. Singing
4. Prayer

CORPORATE WORSHIP

1. Infants
2. The value of having children with us in corporate worship
3. 3-year-olds
4. 4-year-olds and up

Parenthood

Lesson 13

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT HEART-CENTERED PARENTING

1. How can I expect obedience from the heart? After all, if my children aren't Christians, then they can't keep the law.
2. Do I do this every time they disobey?
3. This is hard work, and I'm seeing little fruit; can you encourage me?

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read "Evangelizing Our Children" by E. Calvin Beisner at ligonier.org/learn/articles/evangelizing-our-children
- Read "Questions for Discerning a Child's Profession of Faith" by Jill Nelson at truth78.org/blog/post/questions-for-discerning-a-childs-profession-of-faith

Childhood (6–12 Years Old)

INTRODUCTION: “CHILDHOOD”

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people” (Luke 2:52).

1. Areas

- a. Since *Jesus increased in wisdom*, parents should nurture their children’s *intellects*.
- b. Since *Jesus increased in stature*, parents should help their children to *prepare their bodies* for the rigors and discipline of labor and service.
- c. Since *Jesus increased in favor with God*, parents should nurture their children’s *spiritual growth*.
- d. Since *Jesus increased in favor with men*, parents should nurture their children *socially*.

2. Aims

- a. Spiritual nurture’s first aim is to establish the child in patterns of upright behavior.
- b. Spiritual nurture’s second and greater aim is to establish them in true godliness.

3. Activities

- a. Spiritual nurture requires parents to depend upon the grace of God.
- b. Spiritual nurture requires parents—while depending upon God’s grace—to actively do their duty.

ADDRESS THE HEART

“A good person produces good out of the good stored up in his heart. An evil person produces evil out of the evil stored up in his heart, for his mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart” (Luke 6:45).

Parenthood

Lesson 14

DEVELOP CHARACTER

1. Dealing less with defiance and dealing more with the need for growth in character.
2. Need for a long-term vision.
3. Interpret their behavior in categories of character.

INSTRUCT AND APPEAL TO THE CONSCIENCE

THREE-PRONGED TOOL OF DIAGNOSIS

1. The child in relationship to God
2. The child in relationship to himself
3. The child in relationship to others

Parenthood

Lesson 14

DISCERNING SALVATION

1. Overview

- a. Becoming a Christian is a simple act of faith.

“If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom. 10:9).

- b. Being a Christian means that simple faith expresses itself in the evidence of a changed life.

“My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples” (John 15:8).

“For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, but worldly grief produces death” (2 Cor. 7:10).

2. How do you discern whether saving faith is present or not?

- a. You are NOT the Holy Spirit.
- b. You have been GIVEN the Holy Spirit.

Confession of Faith – Repentance and Faith

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:15).

Fruit of Faith – Obedience and Love

“Now this is his command: that we believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another as he commanded us. 24 The one who keeps his commands remains in him, and he in him. And the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit he has given us” (1 John 3:23–24).

“[Love] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Cor. 13:7).

Parenthood

Lesson 14

3. Ten Marks of Regeneration (Andy Davis)

- a. Love for God and for Christ
- b. Love for Christian brothers/sisters
- c. Growth in obedience to God's commands
- d. Love for God's word
- e. Growth in hatred of sin/evil
- f. Actual temptations refused, increasing victories over sin
- g. Growth in good deeds done in service to God and others
- h. Ability to explain the gospel, especially the facts of Jesus' life and the key issue of substitutionary atonement (though not necessarily in those words)
- i. Some understanding of "counting the cost"
- j. Internal testimony of the Holy Spirit that we are God's children

4. Ten Thoughts on Evangelizing Your Children (Randy Stinson)

- a. Share your testimony/faith story with kids.
- b. Pray for kids to be saved and never give up.
- c. Be listening for spiritual questions and spiritual moments.
- d. Answer spiritual questions truthfully and simply.
- e. Use the Bible when sharing with kids.
- f. Look for genuine conviction of sin and desire to repent.
- g. Encourage kids to take steps.
- h. Don't pressure them; let kids come to Christ at their own pace.
- i. Let the church help.
- j. Always be talking about God in everything we do.

5. Baptism and Church Membership

- a. Credible testimony in the home
- b. Credible testimony in the church

Parenthood

Lesson 14

Some wrongly say: "Do not teach your children; they will be converted in God's own time if it be his purpose, therefore leave them to run wild in the streets," will certainly both "sin against the child" and the Lord Jesus. We might as well say, "If that piece of ground is to grow a harvest, it will do so if it be God's good pleasure; therefore leave it, and let the weeds spring up and cover it; do not endeavor for a moment to kill the weeds, or to sow the good seed." Why, such reasoning as this would be not only cruel to our children, but grievously displeasing to Christ. Parents! I do hope you are all endeavoring to bring your children to Christ by teaching them the things of God. Let them not be strangers to the plan of salvation. Never let it be said that a child of yours reached years in which his conscience could act, and he could judge between good and evil, without knowing the doctrine of the atonement, without understanding the great substitutionary work of Christ. Set before your child life and death, hell and heaven, judgment and mercy, his own sin, and Christ's most precious blood; and as you set these before him, labor with him, persuade him, as the apostle did his congregation, with tears and weeping, to turn unto the Lord; and your prayers and supplications shall be heard so that the Spirit of God shall bring them to Jesus" (Charles Spurgeon, "Children Brought to Christ and Not to the Font").

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read "A Call to Teenagers to be Free" by John Piper at desiringgod.org/articles/a-call-to-teenagers-to-be-free

Teenagers (13-19 Years Old)

INTRODUCTION: TEENAGE YEARS

“Flee from youthful passions, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart” (2 Tim. 2:22).

TEENAGE DOORS OF OPPORTUNITY

1. A teenager's widening world
2. Teenage insecurity
3. Teenage rebellion

WHOSE IDOLS ARE IN THE WAY?

1. Comfort
2. Respect
3. Appreciation
4. Success
5. Control

PROVERBS: THE TENDENCIES OF YOUTH

1. Little hunger for wisdom or correction

“My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, 2 listening closely to wisdom and directing your heart to understanding; 3 furthermore, if you call out to insight and lift your voice to understanding, 4 if you seek it like silver and search for it like hidden treasure, 5 then you will understand the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God” (Prov. 2:1–5).

2. A tendency toward legalism

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways know him, and he will make your paths straight” (Prov. 3:5–6).

3. A tendency to be unwise in their choice of companions

“The one who walks with the wise will become wise, but a companion of fools will suffer harm” (Prov. 13:20).

4. A susceptibility to sexual temptation

“My son, pay attention to my wisdom; listen closely to my understanding 2 so that you may maintain discretion and your lips safeguard knowledge. 3 Though the lips of the forbidden woman drip honey and her words are smoother than oil, 4 in the end she’s as bitter as wormwood and as sharp as a double-edged sword” (Prov. 5:1–4).

5. An absence of eschatological (or eternal) perspective

“Don’t be deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever a person sows he will also reap, 8 because the one who sows to his flesh will reap destruction from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit” (Gal. 6:7–8).

6. A lack of heart awareness

“My son, pay attention to my words; listen closely to my sayings. 21 Don’t lose sight of them; keep them within your heart. 22 For they are life to those who find them, and health to one’s whole body. 23 Guard your heart above all else, for it is the source of life” (Prov. 4:20–23).

Parenthood

Lesson 15

HOW TO “PASTOR” OUR TEENS

1. Keeping the main goals in view:

- a. Focusing on the spiritual struggle
- b. Developing a heart of conviction and wisdom
- c. Understanding and reacting redemptively with the culture
- d. Developing a heart for God
- e. Preparing our teens to leave

2. Practical thoughts as we pursue the goals:

- a. Empathize
- b. Be deliberate and intentional
- c. Strive for constant conversations
- d. Ask questions
- e. Don't lecture

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read “The Complicated Relationships Between Adult Children and Their Parents” by Jim Newheiser at blog.newgrowthpress.com/the-complicated-relationship-between-adult-children-and-their-parents/
- Read “Five Lessons for Young Families from a New Empty Nester” by Thomas Kidd at thegospelcoalition.org/article/lessons-empty-nester/
- Read “The Fruitful Empty Nest: Lessons for When the Kids Leave Home” by Linda Linder at [.desiringgod.org/articles/the-fruitful-empty-nest](http://desiringgod.org/articles/the-fruitful-empty-nest)
- Read “The Forgotten Ministry: The Influence of Our Grandparents” by Peter V. Deison at voice.dts.edu/article/the-forgotten-ministry-the-influence-of-our-grandparents/

Grandparenting: Adult Children and Grandchildren

INTRODUCTION: FIVE PHASES OF DISCIPLING CHILDREN

1. **Caregiver**—The parent cares for all the needs of a child such as food, clothes, and hygiene. Season of life: Infancy and preschool. Biblical example: “Sons are indeed a heritage from the Lord, offspring, a reward” (Ps. 127:3).
2. **Commander**—The parent controls every area of the child’s life and corrects the child to encourage holiness in Christ. Season of life: Grade school. Biblical example: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).
3. **Coach**—The parent delegates decision-making as a child matures, models Christlike living, and releases responsibility. Season of life: Adolescence. Biblical example: “Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1).
4. **Counselor**—The parent offers biblical guidance to navigate life choices and challenges. Season of life: Early adulthood. Biblical example: “Plans fail when there is no counsel, but with many advisers they succeed” (Prov. 15:22).
5. **Consultant**—The parent provides godly wisdom from a lifetime of experience and mentors adult children to make disciples of their children. Season of life: Adulthood. Biblical example: “Be wise, my son, and bring my heart joy, so that I can answer anyone who taunts me” (Prov. 15:22).

CULTURAL MESSAGES AND TYPES OF GRANDPARENTS

1. **Three Cultural Messages**
 - a. *You need to live your life independent of your family.*
 - b. *You’ve worked hard and now it’s time to enjoy yourself.*
 - c. *Your role is to be a companion and playmate to your grandchild.*

Parenthood

Lesson 16

2. Four Types of Grandparents (Larry Fowler, *Biblical Grandparenting*)

- a. **Biblical**—Biblical grandparents understand their role concerning the biblical mandate to teach and tell the next generations the truth about God and his redemption plan.
- b. **Cultural**—Cultural grandparents tend to focus their energy on doting over their grandchildren, or giving support to their grandchildren, with little attention to building that legacy of faith and truth.
- c. **Blocked**—These grandparents may desire to fulfill their biblical role, but they are “blocked”—in other words, there is some kind of barrier that gets in the way of fulfilling their biblical roles (e.g. geographical, relational).
- d. **Unequipped**—This type of grandparent wants to make a difference but feels inadequate to do so (e.g. fear, guilt, ignorance).

THE BIBLICAL ROLE OF GRANDPARENTS

“Only be on your guard and diligently watch yourselves, so that you don’t forget the things your eyes have seen and so that they don’t slip from your mind as long as you live. Teach them to your children and your grandchildren” (Deut. 4:9).

“Do this so that you may fear the Lord your God all the days of your life by keeping all his statutes and commands I am giving you, your son, and your grandson, and so that you may have a long life . . . 5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 6 These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. 7 Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deut. 6:2, 5–7).

“Grandchildren are the crown of the elderly, and the pride of children is their fathers” (Prov. 17:6).

“We will not hide them from their children, but will tell a future generation the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, his might, and the wondrous works he has performed. 5 He established a testimony in Jacob and set up a law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach to their children 6 so that a future generation—children yet to be born—might know. They were to rise and tell their children 7 so that they might put their confidence in God and not forget God’s works, but keep his commands” (Ps. 78:4–7).

Parenthood

Lesson 16

“The righteous thrive like a palm tree and grow like a cedar tree in Lebanon . . . 14 They will still bear fruit in old age, healthy and green, 15 to declare, “The Lord is just; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him” (Ps. 92:12, 14–15).

“I recall your sincere faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and now, I am convinced, is in you also” (2 Tim. 1:5).

God expects grandparents to be disciple-making, God-fearing, daily-impressing, grandchild-loving, testimony-telling, truth-teaching, fruit-bearing, and faith-filled individuals.

DISCIPLESHIP PRACTICES EVERY GRANDPARENT CAN DO

“We proclaim him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. 29 I labor for this, striving with his strength that works powerfully in me” (Col. 1:28–29).

Key Principle: *Your grandchild’s maturity in Christ is your priority.*

1. Ask and answer questions.

“When your children ask you, ‘What does this ceremony mean to you?’ 27 you are to reply, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when he struck the Egyptians, and he spared our homes’” (Exod. 12:26–27).

Become an askable grandparent, and become skilled at the art of asking good questions.

2. Give a blessing.

“A family blessing begins with meaningful touching. It continues with a spoken message of high value, a message that pictures a special future for the individual being blessed, and one that is based on an active commitment to see the blessing come to pass” (John Trent and Gary Smalley, *The Blessing: Giving the Gift of Unconditional Love and Acceptance*, 30).

3. Intentional meals.

“Talk about them when you sit in your house . . .” (Deut. 6:7).

Parenthood

Lesson 16

- a. An opportunity to connect.
 - i. View mealtime as talk time.
 - ii. Know that food is your secret weapon.
 - iii. Serve child-friendly food.
 - iv. Accommodate food preferences.
 - v. Invest in a quality table.
- b. An opportunity to celebrate.
- c. An opportunity to teach.

4. Prayer.

“Whenever a round of banqueting was over, Job would send for his children and purify them, rising early in the morning to offer burnt offerings for all of them. For Job thought, “Perhaps my children have sinned, having cursed God in their hearts.” This was Job’s regular practice” (Job 1:5).

5. Communicate wisdom.

“When I was a son with my father, tender and precious to my mother, 4 he taught me and said, “Your heart must hold on to my words. Keep my commands and live. 5 Get wisdom, get understanding; don’t forget or turn away from the words from my mouth” (Prov. 4:3–5).

6. Read and discuss the Bible.

“I recall your sincere faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and now, I am convinced, is in you also” (2 Tim. 1:5).

“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed. You know those who taught you, 15 and you know that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:14–15).

- a. Early instruction
- b. Frequent instruction
- c. Biblical instruction

Parenthood

Lesson 16

7. Tell God stories.

“This will be written for a later generation, and a people who have not yet been created will praise the Lord” (Ps. 102:18).

- a. Personal testimony
- b. Stories of God’s faithfulness

8. Share the gospel.

- a. God
- b. Man
- c. Christ
- d. Response

CONCLUSION

God designed grandparents to be disciple-makers who pass on a rich heritage of faith in Christ to future generations. Grandparents are partners with parents to raise the next generations to know, love, and serve God. Grandparenting matters!

“God, you have taught me from my youth, and I still proclaim your wondrous works. 18 Even while I am old and gray, God, do not abandon me, while I proclaim your power to another generation, your strength to all who are to come” (Ps. 71:17–18).

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read “Don’t Let the Screen Strangle Your Soul (1 of 2)” by Kevin DeYoung at thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/dont-let-the-screen-strangle-your-soul/
- Read “Don’t Let the Screen Strangle Your Soul (2 of 2)” by Kevin DeYoung at thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/dont-let-the-screen-strangle-your-soul-2-of-2/

Children, Technology, and Social Media: Ten Questions About Tech

INTRODUCTION

1. **Technology has become utterly ubiquitous – like the air we breathe. It affects how we live, think, and relate whether we realize it or not. But because it's literally part of how we live, we may not give it a lot of serious thought.**

“As anyone who knows a teen or tween can attest, media are among the most powerful forces in young people’s lives today. Eight-to-eighteen-year-olds spend more time with media than in any other activity besides (maybe) sleeping – and average of more than 7-1/2 hours a day, 7 days a week” (Albert Mohler).

2. **Whether good, bad, or neutral, today’s technology presents some unique dangers. So how do we deal with it?**

“Now people have in their hand what is essentially a deadly weapon – the most forceful tool for life-destroying temptation that’s ever been put into the human hand. You’ve never been able to bring temptation at that level – visually, audibly, with that availability – in history. You can pollute yourself faster and more extensively than ever” (John MacArthur).

“A family that does not or cannot control the information environment of its children is barely a family at all, and may lay claim to the name only by virtue of the fact that its members share biological information through DNA . . . That the family can no longer do this is, I believe, obvious to everyone” (Neil Postman, *Technopoly*, ch. 5).

3. **The Bible is sufficient, and has much to say to help us think rightly about technology.**

“They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption, since people are enslaved to whatever defeats them” (2 Pet. 2:19).

TEN QUESTIONS TO TEST THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN YOUR HOME

1. “Is it helping us to be present?”

“These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. 7 Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. 9 Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your city gates” (Deut. 6:6–9).

2. “Is it helping us to be alert?” (Mark 13:33; Eph. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:6; 1 Pet. 5:8)

“Besides this, since you know the time, it is already the hour for you to wake up from sleep, because now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed” (Rom. 13:11).

3. “Is it helping us to be transformed?”

“Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:2).

4. “Is it helping us to grow in wisdom?” (Prov. 4:5–7, Ps. 90:12)

5. “Is it helping us to be patient?” (Ps. 27:14)

Parenthood

Lesson 16

6. “Is it helping us to be content?” (Phil. 4:11)

“At first I’d figured that the problem was a symptom of middle-age mind rot. But my brain, I realized, wasn’t just drifting. It was hungry. It was demanding to be fed the way the Net fed it – and the more it was fed, the hungrier it became. Even when I was away from my computer, I yearned to check e-mail, click links, do some Googling. I wanted to be connected” (Nicholas Carr, *What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*, 16.)

7. “Is it helping us to be real?”

8. “Is it helping us to pray?” (Luke 5:16)

“The end of all things is near; therefore, be alert and sober-minded for prayer” (1 Pet. 4:7).

9. “Is it helping us to be humble?”

“God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble” (Jas. 4:6).

10. “Is it helping us be stewards?”

“Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise— 16 making the most of the time, because the days are evil. 17 So don’t be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is” (Eph. 5:15–17).

Parenthood

Lesson 16

BONUS Question: Is it helping me to be holy?

“Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained from the world” (Jas. 1:27).

“Pursue peace with everyone, and holiness—without it no one will see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14).

“But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; 16 for it is written, **Be holy, because I am holy**” (1 Pet. 1:15–16).

“Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things” (Phil 4:8).

EXAMPLES FOR “DIGITAL BOUNDARIES”

- Do not check my smartphone until after my morning devotions.
- Turn notifications off.
- Try to end my digital day by 9:00 p.m.
- Don't check my smartphone when having lunch or dinner with a friend, or leave phone in car.
- Take a digital fast every Sunday (or start with every Sunday afternoon)
- No digital gadgets at mealtimes.
- Limit checking emails or texts to once an hour.
- Try not to talk on the phone to virtual people when real people are in front of me.
- If children are at someone else's home, no music, media, or movies they have not seen at home.
- Pray daily for God to help me become a good steward of my virtual life.

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read “10 Parenting Imperatives from the Book of Proverbs” by Paul Carter at ca.thegospelcoalition.org/columns/ad-fontes/10-parenting-imperatives-book-proverbs/

Proverbs: The Bible's Parenting Manual

Ten Lessons Kids Need to Learn

INTRODUCTION

"[Proverbs is a] fitting textbook for parents . . . It is an inspired book of wisdom from the wisest father who ever lived, a vital compendium of the sort of practical wisdom *all* parents need to pass on to their children" (John MacArthur, *What the Bible Says About Parenting*, 70).

1. Proverbs are truisms, not inviolable promises.

2. Proverbs should not only be verbally repeated; they should be lived out.

"A wise person is cautious and turns from evil, but a fool is easily angered and is careless" (Prov. 14:16).

"A fool's way is right in his own eyes, but whoever listens to counsel is wise" (Prov. 12:15).

3. Proverbs is a demonstration that words matter.

"My son, pay attention to my words; listen closely to my sayings. 21 Don't lose sight of them; keep them within your heart. 22 For they are life to those who find them, and health to one's whole body" (Prov. 4:20–22).

TEN LESSONS KIDS (AND ADULTS) NEED TO LEARN

1. We must teach our children to fear their God.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and discipline" (Prov. 1:7).

"You have not satisfied the responsibilities of parenthood when you have made your children submit to you. . . . My goal as a father was not merely to have my children being chastened by their father. I wanted them to fear being chastened by their God" (John MacArthur, *What the Bible Says About Parenting*, 79).

Parenthood

Lesson 18

2. We must teach our children to guard their minds.

“Guard your heart above all else, for it is the source of life” (Prov. 4:23).

“Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral excellence and if there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things” (Phil. 4:8).

3. We must teach our children to obey their parents.

“Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction, and don’t reject your mother’s teaching” (Prov. 1:8).

“As for the eye that ridicules a father and despises obedience to a mother, may ravens of the valley pluck it out and young vultures eat it.” (Prov. 30:17).

“The words of King Lemuel, a pronouncement that his mother taught him” (Prov. 31:1).

4. We must teach our children to select their companions.

“My son, if sinners entice you, don’t be persuaded” (Prov. 1:10).

“The one who walks with the wise will become wise, but a companion of fools will suffer harm” (Prov. 13:20).

Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals” (1 Cor. 15:33).

Parenthood

Lesson 18

5. We must teach our children to control their lusts.

“It will rescue you from a forbidden woman, from a wayward woman with her flattering talk, 17 who abandons the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God; 18 for her house sinks down to death and her ways to the land of the departed spirits. 19 None return who go to her; none reach the paths of life” (Prov. 2:16–19).

“Though the lips of the forbidden woman drip honey and her words are smoother than oil, 4 in the end she’s as bitter as wormwood and as sharp as a double-edged sword. 5 Her feet go down to death; her steps head straight for Sheol” (Prov. 5:3–5).

“Now, sons, listen to me, and pay attention to the words from my mouth. 25 Don’t let your heart turn aside to her ways; don’t stray onto her paths. 26 For she has brought many down to death; her victims are countless. 27 Her house is the road to Sheol, descending to the chambers of death” (Prov. 7:24–27).

6. We must teach our children to enjoy their spouses.

“Drink water from your own cistern, water flowing from your own well. 16 Should your springs flow in the streets, streams in the public squares? 17 They should be for you alone and not for you to share with strangers. 18 Let your fountain be blessed, and take pleasure in the wife of your youth. 19 A loving deer, a graceful doe—let her breasts always satisfy you; be lost in her love forever. 20 Why, my son, would you lose yourself with a forbidden woman or embrace a wayward woman? (Prov. 5:15–20).

“Better to live on the corner of a roof than to share a house with a nagging wife. . . Better to live in a wilderness than with a nagging and hot-tempered wife. . . An endless dripping on a rainy day and a nagging wife are alike” (Prov. 21:9, 19; 27:15).

“A man who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD. . . Who can find a wife of noble character? She is far more precious than jewels. 11 The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will not lack anything good” (Prov. 18:22; 31:10–11).

Parenthood

Lesson 18

7. We must teach our children to watch their words.

“Don’t let your mouth speak dishonestly, and don’t let your lips talk deviously” (Prov. 4:24).

“No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear” (Eph. 4:29).

“Lying lips are detestable to the Lord, but faithful people are his delight” (Prov. 12:22).

“When there are many words, sin is unavoidable, but the one who controls his lips is prudent” (Prov. 10:19).

8. We must teach our children to pursue their work.

“Go to the ant, you slacker! Observe its ways and become wise. 7 Without leader, administrator, or ruler, 8 it prepares its provisions in summer; it gathers its food during harvest. 9 How long will you stay in bed, you slacker? When will you get up from your sleep? 10 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the arms to rest, 11 and your poverty will come like a robber, your need, like a bandit” (Prov. 6:6–11).

“Idle hands make one poor, but diligent hands bring riches. 5 The son who gathers during summer is prudent; the son who sleeps during harvest is disgraceful” (Prov. 10:4–5).

“A door turns on its hinges, and a slacker, on his bed” (Prov. 26:14).

Parenthood

Lesson 18

9. We must teach our children to manage their money.

“Honor the Lord with your possessions and with the first produce of your entire harvest; 10 then your barns will be completely filled, and your vats will overflow with new wine” (Prov. 3:9–10).

“One person gives freely, yet gains more; another withholds what is right, only to become poor. 25 A generous person will be enriched, and the one who gives a drink of water will receive water. 26 People will curse anyone who hoards grain, but a blessing will come to the one who sells it” (Prov. 11:24–26).

“The one who profits dishonestly troubles his household, but the one who hates bribes will live” (Prov. 15:27).

“My son, if you have put up security for your neighbor or entered into an agreement with a stranger, 2 you have been snared by the words of your mouth—trapped by the words from your mouth. 3 Do this, then, my son, and free yourself, for you have put yourself in your neighbor’s power: Go, humble yourself, and plead with your neighbor. 4 Don’t give sleep to your eyes or slumber to your eyelids. 5 Escape like a gazelle from a hunter, like a bird from a hunter’s trap” (Prov. 6:1–5).

“Anyone trusting in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like foliage” (Prov. 11:28).

“Don’t wear yourself out to get rich; because you know better, stop! 5 As soon as your eyes fly to it, it disappears, for it makes wings for itself and flies like an eagle to the sky” (Prov. 23:4–5).

“The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is a slave to the lender” (Prov. 22:7).

“Better a little” passages (Prov. 15:16; 16:8; Ps. 37:16)

10. We must teach our children to love their neighbors.

“When it is in your power, don’t withhold good from the one to whom it belongs. 28 Don’t say to your neighbor, “Go away! Come back later. I’ll give it tomorrow”—when it is there with you. 29 Don’t plan any harm against your neighbor, for he trusts you and lives near you” (Prov. 3:27–29).

“If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink, 22 for you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you” (Prov. 25:21–22).

Parenthood

Lesson 18

CONCLUSION

“Parents, if you fail to teach your children to fear God, the devil will teach them to hate God. If you fail to teach them to guard their minds, the devil will teach them to have a corrupt mind. If you fail to teach them to obey their parents, the devil will teach them to rebel and break their parents’ hearts. If you fail to teach them to select carefully their companions, the devil will choose their companions for them. If you fail to teach them to control their lusts, the devil will teach them how to fulfill their lusts. If fail to teach them to enjoy their own spouses, the devil will teach them to destroy their marriages. If you fail to teach them to watch their words, the devil will fill their mouths with filth. If you fail to teach them to pursue their work, the devil will make their laziness a tool of hell. If you fail to teach them to manage their money, the devil will teach them to squander it on riotous living. And if you fail to teach them to love their neighbors, the devil will teach them to love only themselves and the next. We have a great responsibility to this generation and the next” (John MacArthur, *What the Bible Says About Parenting*, 103–104).

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read “Public, Private, Online, Homeschool?” by John Piper at desiringgod.org/interviews/public-private-online-homeschool
- Read “What I’ve Learned About School Choice” by Winfree Brisley at thegospelcoalition.org/article/learned-school-choice/

Christians and Schooling Options

INTRODUCTION

1. Christian liberty and biblical wisdom (see Romans 14)

What (if any) guidelines does the Bible has for us when it comes to the education of our children? Has God left educating our children up to chance, or has he given us some instructions on how we can pursue this in a godly manner?

2. Education or training is broader than simply reading, writing, and other learned skills.

3. Some guidelines before we start:

- a. Stop pitting one form of education against all others (the danger of pride)
- b. Stop spreading lies and making broad false claims against forms of education that we do not think are right (the danger of bearing false witness)
- c. Stop worrying about what everyone else is doing and focus on what the Word of God has for us to do (the danger of false guilt)

WHAT IS THE PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITY TO THEIR CHILDREN?

1. Education is good, but it must be tethered to the Scriptures and done for God's glory.

"In addition to the Teacher being a wise man, he constantly taught the people knowledge; he weighed, explored, and arranged many proverbs. 10 The Teacher sought to find delightful sayings and write words of truth accurately. 11 The sayings of the wise are like cattle prods, and those from masters of collections are like firmly embedded nails. The sayings are given by one Shepherd. 12 But beyond these, my son, be warned: there is no end to the making of many books, and much study wearies the body. 13 When all has been heard, the conclusion of the matter is this: fear God and keep his commands, because this is for all humanity. 14 For God will bring every act to judgment, including every hidden thing, whether good or evil." (Eccl. 12:9–14).

Parenthood

Lesson 19

- 2. Regardless of the mode of education, there are standard commands that should be going on in each household.**

“Imprint these words of mine on your hearts and minds, bind them as a sign on your hands, and let them be a symbol on your foreheads. 19 Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 20 Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your city gates, 21 so that as long as the heavens are above the earth, your days and those of your children may be many in the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors” (Deut. 11:18–21).

“Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction, and don’t reject your mother’s teaching” (Prov. 1:8).

“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed. You know those who taught you, 15 and you know that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:14–17).

“Fathers, don’t stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

“So Joshua summoned the twelve men he had selected from the Israelites, one man for each tribe, 5 and said to them, “Go across to the ark of the Lord your God in the middle of the Jordan. Each of you lift a stone onto his shoulder, one for each of the Israelite tribes, 6 so that this will be a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean to you?’ 7 you should tell them, ‘The water of the Jordan was cut off in front of the ark of the Lord’s covenant. When it crossed the Jordan, the Jordan’s water was cut off.’ Therefore these stones will always be a memorial for the Israelites” (Josh. 4:4–7).

Parenthood

Lesson 19

THE BIG THREE EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS FOR YOUR KIDS

1. Public School

- a. Opportunities
- b. Challenges

2. Christian School

- a. Opportunities
- b. Challenges

3. Home School

- a. Opportunities
- b. Challenges

TWO THINGS TO CONSIDER IN CHOOSING AN EDUCATIONAL MODEL

1. What is our own priority as a parent?

- a. We should stop using the language “this is what’s best for my child.”
- b. We should never do something because “that the way it has always been done.”
- c. We are to make decisions about our child’s education based upon what honors and glorifies God . . . not what is best for the child or the parent.

“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31).

2. What are your idols in your own heart that motivate your choice?

- a. Comfort
- b. Academic prowess
- c. Morality
- d. Salvation

Parenthood

Lesson 19

PRACTICAL QUESTIONS TO BE INVOLVED IN YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION

1. What are my children learning?

- a. Not all homeschooling curriculum is written from a biblical perspective.
- b. Not all governmental or public school teachers want your kids to learn Critical Race Theory or become transgender.
- c. Not all Christian schools teach the Bible, have saved teachers, or even share the gospel with the kids.

No matter where your children are leaning basic academics, you as a parent have a responsibility to not only teach them about the Lord (Deut. 6; 11; Pro 1; Eph. 4) but since you are their parent you also have the responsibility to know what is being taught to them.

2. Who is the authority that is teaching my child?

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because this is right. 2 Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, 3 so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land” (Eph. 6:1–3).

God has given the authority over your children to you as the parent.

3. What do I need to correct or teach differently to my child?

“Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise— 16 making the most of the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:15–16).

We should never simply trust something because it comes from a certain source. We must always inspect what we expect.

FINAL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Are you fulfilling the commands to make sure your children are being taught in the Lord?
- Do you know what the Lord expects from you as a parent?
- Do you know the content of what your children are being taught?
- Is your first priority in choosing a mode of teaching the glory of God or other reasons?

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read “You Don’t Need More Parenting Advice” by Paul Tripp at desiringgod.org/articles/you-dont-need-more-parenting-advice

The Gospel and the Overzealous Parent: Resting in God's Perfect Parenthood

INTRODUCTION

1. Where we've been (see previous lessons)
2. The temptation of tiger parenting
3. The spiritual tiger parent
4. The question:

Is being a Christian parent a tremendously important, comprehensive, often-difficult job that requires great resolve and discipline and self-sacrifice, or are we putting too much pressure on ourselves?

5. The answer:

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose" (Phil. 2:12–13).

"For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift— 9 not from works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do." (Eph. 2:8–10).

"Unless the LORD builds a house, its builders labor over it in vain" (Ps. 127:1).

As parents and caregivers, we work with all our hearts—but ultimately rest in God's perfect and sovereign parenthood.

Parenthood

Lesson 20

TO REST IN GOD’S PARENTHOOD, SEVEN “DON’TS”

1. Don’t miss it.

“See what great love the Father has given us that we should be called God’s children—and we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it didn’t know him” (1 John 3:1).

2. Don’t be hypercritical.

“As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him” (Ps. 103:13).

3. Don’t be surprised by disobedience.

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins 2 in which you previously walked according to the ways of this world, according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient. 3 We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also” (Eph. 2:1–3).

4. Don’t assume you’ll know how they’ll turn out.

Parenthood

Lesson 20

5. Don't fear.

"Children are a precious gift from God, but a great deal of anxiety accompanies them. They may be a great joy or a great bitterness to their parents; they may be filled with the Spirit of God or possessed with the Spirit of evil. In all cases, the Word of God gives us the one prescription for the curing of all their ills, 'Bring the boy to me' (Mark 9:19). . . . Ungodly children, when they show us our own powerlessness against the depravity of their hearts, drive us to flee to the strong for strength, and this is a great blessing to us" (Charles Spurgeon).

6. Don't pretend you have it all together.

7. Don't be only "transcendent."

CONCLUSION

"Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6–7).

"The LORD your God is among you, a warrior who saves. He will rejoice over you with gladness. He will be quiet in his love. He will delight in you with singing" (Zeph. 3:17).

The Stinson Family Plan

PREAMBLE

This document is to serve as a guide for our family to fulfill God's plan for us as we strive to honor Him and live our lives in obedience to Him. There are several overarching principles that guide us in this process.

Marriage is the fundamental priority relationship in the home. Adam and Eve were a family before kids came along. Kids are an addition to the family.

All in the home are expected to exhibit the fruit of the spirit, love God with all of their heart, mind, and strength, love their neighbor as themselves, obey the ten commandments, and all of the other admonitions and exhortations in Scripture.

Knowing that no one can fulfill all of God's requirements perfectly, we will expect members of this home to sin and be sinned against. In these events, forgiveness will be vigilantly sought after and graciously given at the first possible opportunity.

Gender is a fundamental marker between human beings and we believe that boys will generally grow up and be husbands and fathers and girls will generally grow up to be wives and mothers. Therefore, we will, in all of our training, be intentional about instilling and cultivating the qualities and character traits necessary for their respective tasks.

MISSION

We will glorify God in the various relationships in our home as we walk, work, and worship, with each other and submit to his word and point others to Christ.

Relationship to God

Goal 1. We will cultivate a home where God and His word are honored formally, conversationally, and naturally as we go throughout the day.

Formally:	Catechism
	Daily quiet time
	Scripture Memory
	Evening Family Devotion
Naturally:	Christian music
	God-conversations
	Christian books

Parenthood

Appendix

Goal 2. We will develop, expose, and improve Godly character through the unpredictable moments provided in athletics appropriate to one's gender.

Participate in local sports teams/events

Goal 3. We will develop an appreciation for God's goodness in beauty, aesthetics, music, art, and nature.

Museums

Hunting/Fishing

Home care

Camping

Learning an instrument

Goal 4. We will strive to have healthy bodies.

Preparing healthy meals at home

Regular exercise (3x per week)

Relationship to Family

Goal 5. We will cultivate a strong and healthy marriage that portrays the gospel picture of Christ and the church and keep our commitment to our lifelong vows we made to each other on January 5, 1991.

Date night 3 times per month

Four-day getaway 3 times per year

Debrief each day

Pray together 5–7 times per week

Read about marriage

Consult and counsel with others

Goal 6. We will aggressively and persistently cultivate relationships with our children that will turn our hearts toward them and their hearts toward us.

Father/daughter date nights

Passport to purity weekends

Men's night out

Girls' night out

Conferences

Annual dad trips

Family vacations

Parenthood

Appendix

Relationship to the Local Church

Goal 7. We will maintain faithful commitment, involvement, and accountability with Highview Baptist Church according to its definition of faithfulness, our gifts, and station in life.

Faithful to attend worship each week
Faithful to attend Sunday School each week
Faithful in tithing and giving
Randy: teach Sunday School
Danna: Assist in Sunday School and with adoption ministry
Kids: Awana and Youth group Wed. nights
Pray for our leaders

Relationship to Our Neighbor

Goal 8. We will cultivate a passion for the great commission and a love for the nations, widows, orphans, and the impoverished.

Annual mission trip (domestic or international)
Serve the homeless shelter locally
Serve widows in the local church
Serve the local orphanage

Goal 9. We will foster relationships locally with those who are outside the faith for the purpose of evangelism and witness.

Consistent witnesses for Christ by our actions and words in local activities
Once per month (8 months) have a neighbor family over for dinner
Christmas gifts to select neighbors
Two invitation-only events in our home for the neighborhood
Be sensitive to the needs of families in the neighborhood and meet those needs

Randy and Danna Stinson

Gunnar

Georgia

Fisher

Eden

Payton

Willa

Spencer

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

PARENTING—GENERAL TITLES

What the Bible Says About Parenting: God's Plan for Rearing Your Child by John MacArthur
The Faithful Parent: A Biblical Guide to Raising a Family by Martha Peace & Stuart W. Scott
Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family by Paul David Tripp
Shepherding a Child's Heart by Tedd Tripp

PARENTING—SPECIFIC TITLES

Biblical Theology of the Family

God, Marriage, and Family by Andreas Kostenberger
Building Strong Families, Dennis Rainey & Wayne Grudem (ed.)

Family Ministry in the Local Church

Perspectives on Family Ministry: 3 Views, Timothy Paul Jones (ed.)
Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective, Randy Stinson & Timothy Paul Jones (ed.)

Corporate Worship

The Family at Church by Joel R. Beeke
Parenting in the Pew by Robbie Castleman
Let the Children Worship by Jason Helopoulos
"The Family: Together in God's Presence" by John & Noel Piper

Family Worship

ESV Illustrated Family Bible
New City Catechism; The Baptist Catechism
The Biggest Story: How the Snake Crusher Brings Us Back to the Garden by Kevin DeYoung
Getty Kids Hymnal; Family Hymn Sing
Hide 'Em in Your Heart: Bible Memory Melodies by Steve Green
The Big Picture Story Bible by David Helm
Hidden in My Heart CDs (3 vols.)
Read-Aloud Bible Stories by Ella Lindvall
Long Story Short; Old Story New; The Gospel Story Bible by Marty Machowski
Rediscovering the Lost Treasure of Family Worship by Jerry Marcellino
Making Him Known Series by Sally Michael
God With Us: A Journey Home by Jeremy Pierre
Little Pilgrim's Progress by Helen Taylor
It's All About Jesus Bible Storybook by The Gospel Project
The Child's Story Bible by Catherine F. Vos
Family Worship: In the Bible, in History and in Your Home by Donald Whitney
Hymns for a Kids Heart by Bobbie Wolgemuth & Joni Eareckson Tada

Formative Discipline

Instructing a Child's Heart by Tedd & Margy Tripp

Big Truths for Young Hearts: Teaching and Learning the Greatness of God by Bruce A. Ware

Corrective Discipline

Don't Make Me Count to Three! A Mom's Look at Heart-Oriented Discipline by Ginger Hubbard

Peacemaking for Families: A Biblical Guide to Managing Conflict in Your Home by Ken Sande

The Young Peacemaker: Teaching Students to Respond to Conflict in God's Way by Corlette Sande

Gender in the Home

Men and Women in the Church: A Short, Biblical, Practical Introduction by Kevin DeYoung

Missional Motherhood: The Everyday Ministry of Motherhood in the Grand Plan of God by Gloria Furman

Preparing Children for Marriage: How to Teach God's Good Design for Marriage, Sex, Purity, & Dating by Josh Mulvihill

Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood, John Piper & Wayne Grudem (ed.)

Parenthood Phases

This Changes Everything: How the Gospel Transforms the Teen Years by Jaquelle Crowe

On Becoming Babywise: Giving Your Infant the Gift of Nighttime Sleep by Gary Ezzo & Robert Bucknam

Treasuring Christ When Your Hands are Full: Gospel Meditations for Busy Moms by Gloria Furman

Grandparenting with Grace: Living the Gospel with the Next Generation by Larry E. McCall

Grand Parenting: Strengthening Your Family and Passing on Your Faith by Josh Mulvihill

Before I Was Born: God Knew My Name by Carolyn Nystrom

Girl Talk by Carolyn Mahaney & Nicole Mahaney Whitacre

Parenting Today's Adolescent by Dennis & Barbara Rainey

Growing Up God's Way for Boys; Growing Up God's Way for Girls by Chris Richards & Liz Jones

Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens by Paul David Tripp

Children, Technology, and Social Media

The Next Story: Life and Faith After the Digital Explosion by Tim Challies

The Tech-Wise Family: Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in Its Proper Place by Andy Crouch

12 Ways Your Phone Is Changing You by Tony Reinke

The Gospel and the Overzealous Parent

Gospel-Powered Parenting: How the Gospel Shapes and Transforms Parenting by William P. Farley

Glimpses of Grace: Treasuring the Gospel in Your Home by Gloria Furman

Child Proof: Parenting by Faith, Not Formula by Julie Lowe

Give Them Grace: Dazzling Your Kids with the Love of Jesus by Elyse M. Fitzpatrick & Jessica Thompson

Special Issues

Walking through Infertility: Biblical, Theological, and Moral Counsel for Those Who Are Struggling by Matthew Arbo

Wrestling with an Angel: A Story of Love, Disability, and the Lessons of Grace by Greg Lucas

Reclaiming Adoption: Missional Living Through the Rediscovery of Abba Father, Dan Cruver (ed.)



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103 S. Indiana Street
Delphi, IN 46923

(765) 564-3751
fbcdelphi.com