

FAITHFUL PARENTING IN ALL SEASONS PRT 2

Matthew 19:13 Then little children were brought to Him, that He should put His hands on them and pray. And the disciples rebuked them. 14 But Jesus said, Allow the little children to come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of Heaven. 15 And He laid His hands on them, and departed from there.

If you are joining us for the first time, you will find us in the middle of a series titled **HIS COMMISSION OUR MISSION PRT 22**. The theme has been a refocus of priorities for every disciple of Jesus to prioritise the Great Commission.

A disciple of Jesus must always ask how one's behaviour furthers the great commission or takes away from the great commission.

- This morning, I want to finish off the topic started last week titled **FAITHFUL PARENTING IN ALL SEASONS PRT 2**.

1. What is the importance of parents?

1.1 Parents are God's instrument to promote His eternal purpose in each family (Gen 1:26-28).

1.2 Parents are the mediators between God and their children. This means that the parents are to their children what the Lord is to them (Eph. 6:1; Ex. 12:3).

2. What is the unique challenge of parenting at this point in history?

2.1 The intensification of rebellion and perversion

3. What are the biblical responsibilities of parents?

- Parents have been given serious responsibilities and a charges by God. Parenting is therefore not for the immature individual:

3.1 Providing

- To provide for your family is more than just ensuring they have food, clothing, and housing, although these are very important.
- Parents are to provide in all areas of life including spiritual, emotional, social, intellectual, vocational and moral areas.

1 Timothy 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially his family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.

3.2 Protecting (Mt. 18:6)

- Protection is more than preserving them from physical harm. It involves guarding their children from sin, strife, idleness, worldliness, evil associations, dishonesty, hate, moral impurity and anything else that would cause them to become less than what God intended for them to be.

Colossians 3:21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

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- Children are sensitive and vulnerable, and they require parents' protection. They need protection, even from their own parents.
- We know of parents who are in prison right now because of having abused their own children.
- Children are a great treasure, requiring protection. Children are delicate and thus fragile.

3.3 Training (Pro. 22:6; Eph. 6:4)

- Training involves bringing our children to maturity with all of the equipment that they need to be successful and to make wise decisions in life.

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

- Children are born with a nature inclined to sin.

Psalms 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

- Children are born without knowledge.

Proverbs 22:15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

- Children are impressionable and imitators of others.

Ezekiel 16:44 Behold, all who use proverbs shall use this proverb against you, saying, As the mother, so is her daughter.

4. How to get through to your child

- One of the most difficult things to do as a parent is to get through to your child, for your child to understand and appreciate what you are doing and expecting from him.
- This comes down to effective communication. Communication in any relationship is as important as breathing to a human being in order to survive. The moment you stop breathing, it is a matter of time before you pass out.
- Isn't that true with relationships – in the absence of communication, any relationship will eventually wilt and die.
- Your ability to communicate with your little ones determines the quality of the relationship and what they will become eventually.
- How often have we barked out instructions like: *"Jump off the couch", "Pick that up." "Stop being mean to your brother." "I told you to listen."*
- With no positive response from the kids. Too often, we are quick to give up.
- You need to realise that children misbehave for different reasons:
 - Parents may not have expressed their expectations clearly enough — or

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- Parents may have fallen into a pattern of inconsistent enforcement of those expectations.
- It is vitally important that as parents, we master the art of clarifying expectations. Children thrive if parents can have clear expectations for behaviour and enforce those standards consistently.

Effective communication is defined as verbal speech or other methods of relaying information that get a point across. An example of effective communication is when you talk in clear and simple terms.

- God clearly communicated what His son needed to do whilst on earth.

John 5: 19 Jesus gave them this answer: "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.

John 12: 49 For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken.

How do we go about effective communication with our little ones?

4.1 Establish values that shape behaviour

4.1.1 What are values?

- Important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a culture about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable
- Values have a major influence on a person's behavior and attitude and serve as broad guidelines in all situations.
- Defined values come in handy when it comes to ensuring that you are heard when issuing instructions.
- This means that as children grow, they are taught about the values.
- If you are a Christian family, your values would be anchored in the word of God.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 6 And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall

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be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

4.1.2 Write down your values

- Some families may choose to write out and frame a mission statement – show examples of missions statements and our own wall hanging
- Writing down things provides Clarity, creates opportunity for performance. As parents, we find that having our family's values clearly defined up front makes it easier to enforce rules and stick to consequences.
- Examples of values
 - Respect for yourself and for others
 - Consider others more than yourself
 - Be the first one to say I am sorry
- In the absence of clear guiding principles, it becomes chaotic in the house.
- **The importance of establishing values for your kids:**
- It anchors them – they are clear about how to respond to situations
- Articulate them in a simple and exciting manner – must be easy to live out or to remember
- Over a period of time, discuss each value before bed time – allow them to express their understanding of the value
- with every occurrence, find a way of bringing up the practice of the value – how a value applies to the situation. Use opportunities to reinforce the values
- Be the model by living out the values – be vulnerable enough to concede when you have violated one of the espoused values.

4.2 Anchor expectations in day-to-day life

Without realising it, we can easily expect our children to be super kids, perfect kids in whom there is no mess.

- 4.2.1 We often deny the fact that we expect perfection from the little ones: - your child is not an angel
- We feel embarrassed when they cry
 - We lose it when they stumble over themselves or when they wear pants inside out
 - We are impatient when they fail to clean the bathtub properly

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- Now this is the key to effective communication - Keep your expectations anchored in reality,
 - to anticipate mistakes and even foresee some misbehaviour – your kids are not angels.

4.2.2 Have a healthy view of what is normal behaviour in every stage of growth:

- We often overestimate their ability to have self-control, to stay focused on a task and to handle social situations well.
- It's normal for a 2-year-old to get upset if he doesn't get something he wants;
- It's normal for a 3-year-old to lose it if there's a change in his bedtime routine;
- It's normal for a 5-year-old to daydream in the middle of a soccer game;
- It's normal for a 12-year-old to be moody; it's normal for a teenager to be irresponsible every once in a while.
- Anchoring your expectations in reality does not mean disobedience is ok – what are the signs of disobedience:
 - Deliberate violation of a known principle or behaviour

4.2.3 Expectations must be preceded by relevant training – when was the last time you actually trained your kid to do something?

- Create room in your heart for the odd surprises when they fail at those things
- Making mistakes is part of how our kids' brains develop.
- Use these mistakes as launching grounds for further learning.
- Our responses to their mistakes and poor choices must encourage that natural maturing process.

4.3 Train up your children – they don't know better

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.

4.3.1 Why do children need training

- Children are born with a nature inclined to sin (Ps. 51:5).
- Children are born without knowledge (Pro. 22:15).
- Children are impressionable and imitators of others (Ezek. 16:44).
- Children are vulnerable (Mt. 10:16).
- Children have unlimited potential.

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- Children are the carriers of culture (Ps. 78:4-8; 145:4).
- **You have no right to expect what you have not trained them in** – it is unfair and can border on abuse
- Training children is one way of building up their work ethic.
- Training up a child is different from child abuse – our training must be age-appropriate and must still ensure that they enjoy their childhood

4.3.2 How do you go about this?

- Give them age-appropriate chores to accomplish each day.
- Encourage them to take initiative in helping beyond their chore list.
- It's often faster and easier just to straighten their beds or vacuum their room ourselves.
- Exercise patience
- Use the "Let's do it together" approach – this is the only way to remove the inability excuse.
 - Training will include:
 - Repetition
 - gentle correction and
 - Practice before children can succeed.
- Don't aim for perfection, but aim for them to do their best
- Focus on what they are getting right – affirm them

4.3.3 When and how to correct

- Love + Discipline = Happy Functional Children
- minimise their negative tendencies,
- emphasise the positive
- help our kids discover and follow God's plan.
- Scripture says discipline is the key. If a parent does not discipline, a child is likely to suffer dire consequences (Proverbs 5:23), whereas a disciplined child will bring peace and delight to a family (Proverbs 29:17).
- We have to outlast, outthink and outmanoeuvre our children and their inborn bent to foolishness.

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- How does consistent discipline look like:
 - when we are tired,
 - when we are preoccupied,
 - when we are frustrated or angry,
 - when we would rather be relaxing.
 - Apply the same measure for the same offense for the different children
- The following principles will help you ensure that your discipline is consistent and fair:
- **Create capacity that enables correct behaviour.**
 - Never punish for something a child didn't know was wrong. To do so would be unjust.
 - Differentiate between childishness and defiance – never punish a child for being a child
 - Allow/tolerate childish behaviour – never make a child to feel guilty for spilling milk as a result of being naturally clumsy.
- **Exercise appropriate and relevant punishment**
 - Don't burn the house in order to kill an ant - A small infraction should be met with a small form of correction
 - A big wrongdoing should be met with more stringent correction.
 - Don't pass on punishment to another parent, especially if they were not present – this erodes your authority over the child. You have relevant information to decide on the appropriateness of the punishment.
- **Establish guidelines**
 - Establish the child's personal responsibility. Have them tell you what they did wrong.
 - Don't ask, "Did you do that?" You are giving them the opportunity to lie. Now you have two sins with which to deal.
 - Don't ask, "Why did you do that?" You are giving them an opportunity to make up an excuse. Now you will have to judge the excuse.
 - Do ask, "What did you do that was wrong?" Now you are giving them an opportunity to confess and at the same time you are reinforcing the original instruction.
 - Explain again to the child the reason for discipline.
 - Before you correct them, sit in silence for a few seconds for their personal reflection.

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- Correct with a rod, a neutral object (Pro. 13:24; 22:15; 29:15; 23:13-14).
- Never use your hand. You use your hands to show love.
- Never use the “eye for the eye” method (biting, pinching, pulling hair, scratching, slapping, etc.),
- Apply the board of education to the seat of knowledge.
- Correct firmly and do not let his or her crying stop you (Pro. 19:18; 20:30).
- Do not over correct – no more than is necessary.
- Show love afterward without nullifying discipline.
- Do not degrade the child; encourage him or her in right behavior patterns.
- Pray with your child and help him or her to pray for forgiveness.
- The child needs to understand that they have not just offended or sinned against you, they have sinned against God. They need to ask for forgiveness from all offended parties. This will help build into them a God consciousness that will serve them for the rest of their life.
- If there is a need for restitution, have the child do it.
- They need to follow through on the original instruction, apologize to offended parties, replace what was damaged or give back what was taken.
- Be consistent!

A Personal Checkup

How is my example speaking to my children in the following seven areas:

A. Values

1. Is the way I’m handling my money teaching my children Biblical values?
2. Is the way I’m using my time training my children to put God first?

B. Attitudes

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1. Is my attitude towards authority teaching my children to respond whole-heartedly to God's delegated authority?
2. Does my outlook on life inspire positive attitudes in my children?
3. Do I demonstrate the kind of love that teaches my children to love as God does?
4. Does my attitude of meekness teach my children to yield their rights to God?

C. Right Words

1. Does my daily language consistently teach my children to communicate in an edifying manner?
2. Do my words of commendation encourage and motivate my children to more good works?

D. Behaviour and Godly habits

1. Does my behavior teach my children something different than my words?
2. Are my children learning self-control by my balanced lifestyle?

E. Friends

1. Does my circle of friends teach my children how to choose and develop proper friendships?
2. Am I reaching out to others and thereby teaching my children to enlarge their circle of friends?

F. Wisdom

1. Am I teaching my children wisdom and good judgment by making daily decisions based on the principles of God?

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2. Does my response to my failures teach my children how to learn from their own?
3. Do I relate God's Word to experiences and circumstances in daily situations in my home?

G. Physical Health

1. Does my general physical condition motivate my children to keep themselves in good health?
2. It is vital that parents examine each one of these areas in their own personal lives and evaluate whether or not their lifestyle would be desirable to be passed on to their children.
3. Evaluate the above areas and check the ones in which you as a parent feel that you are being a consistently godly example.

Note: Some of the above material was extracted from a book no longer in print titled Principles of Family Life, which was published by City Bible Publishing and was authored by a team of writers including but not limited to the author of this teaching.