

# Parenting a Child's Heart

**Goal:** To establish a Biblical model for child raising. This will be accomplished through coverage of six significant themes. These six themes, though not exhaustive, will create the framework for our study together.

**Method:** The principles will be developed from Scripture with a portion of each session given to Q&A. Each class will be set-up with a case study. The question: "What advise would you give to these parents?"

## Session #1 **Scriptural Authority**

Here we will establish the Biblical mandate for Parenting. We will discuss the authority of God's Word in our lives. Parenting models must be developed from the Word of God. What are the implications? Worksheet #1 handed out for personal homework.

*Primary Scripture: II Timothy 3:16-17; Deuteronomy 6:4-9*

## Session #2 **The Goal of Parenting**

An eternal perspective and being goal oriented in parenting will help with issues like: choosing which battles to fight, the tyranny of the urgent, the reputation of the Parents, etc. Worksheet #2 handed out for personal homework.

*Primary Scripture: Ephesians 6:1-4*

## Session #3 **A Model of Fatherhood**

Children develop their image of God through their earthly parents. What are the implications of this? We will discuss the need for faithfulness, loving relationships, good communication, expectations, etc.

*Primary Scripture: Ephesians 5:1-2; Philippians 4:9*

## Session #4 **The Principle of Sowing and Reaping**

Developing the principle of "sowing and reaping" will facilitate discussion regarding, boundaries, discipline, obedience rather than sacrifice, etc.

*Primary Scripture: Galatians 6:7-10*

## Session #5 **Servant hood**

Learning to put others first is key to "loving our neighbor as our self." This will allow for discussion regarding, respect and honor, the "me syndrome," encouraging others and balance on this topic.

*Primary Scripture: Matthew 20:20-28*

## Session #6 **Disciple Makers**

We are called to reproduce our faith in others. The best and primary place we are to do this is with our children. What are the implications of this teaching: worldly influences, compassion for lost, learning to model, exhibit and share faith with others. Worksheet #3 handed out for personal homework.

*Primary Scripture: II Timothy 2:1-11*

## **Scriptural Authority**

*Primary Scripture: II Timothy 3:16-17; Deuteronomy 6:4-9*

### **Introduction**

As the sovereign Creator of the universe and the One who has established the divine institution of marriage and the home, God has placed children under the authority of their parents. This is more than evident in Scripture by the fact that over and over God addresses parents and gives them the responsibility for the training of their children, not the state (cf. Deut. 6:7-9; Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20). Parental authority, then, is a delegated authority which means parents are not free to do with their children as they please. Ultimately, the authority we exercise as parents is God's authority. Children are *stewardships* from God, blessings He has given to parents to manage for Him. But to be good stewards, parents must raise their children according to God's guidelines.

As parents, then, we are to be in a subordinate relationship to God; we are to exercise only the authority God has given us and do so in accordance with His standards. We are never to arbitrarily establish what is right and wrong by our opinions or those of society unless those standards are based on God's Word. The parent's job is to declare what God's Word says is right and wrong and then seek to promote that in their own lives and in their children's lives. When this is not the case, the parents are acting in rebellion themselves and ruining, by negative example, the stewardship God has entrusted to their care.

### **Comments on II Timothy 3:16-17**

### **Comments on Deuteronomy 6:1-9**

1. Stewards of the truth about the one true God and His works
2. Stewards of blessing
3. Stewards of discipleship

*Homework: Complete worksheet #1 for next week*

## Child Raising

- WORKSHEET #1 -

1. How would you describe your relationship with each of your children? List the name of each child and then describe your relationship as excellent (5), very good (4), good (3), fair (2), poor (1), terrible (0). (If your children are very young, answer the questions with asterisks (\*) as you imagine you would answer them if your children were older and you were facing the situations described in the questions.)
2. If you rated your relationship with your child or children as excellent (5), very good (4), or good (3), jot down:
  - a. your reasons for thinking you have a good relationship;
  - b. what has hindered a better relationship;
  - c. what you must now do to improve your relationship.
3. Put yourself in the place of your children and imagine what you would want from a parent if you were they. What would you want a parent to be? To provide for you? To do for you? Make a list of specific things and then ask if their expectations and desires are reasonable or unreasonable. Are there ways in which you could change without compromising biblical principles to become more the parent your children desire? Circle the ways you could change or improve.
4. List the name of each child and then write down everything you appreciate about each of them. Continue to add to this list. Make it a practice to look for the good qualities, actions, responses, attitudes, conduct, and potential in each child. Communicate your appreciation regularly, specifically, and enthusiastically.
5. Make a list of at least 10 fun things that each child enjoys that you can do with him/her. Plan when you will do at least one of these things with your child (children) at least once a week. List all the fun things you did with your child (children) during the last month.
6. How would you describe the communication level of your family? (5) excellent, (4) very good, (3) good, (2) fair, (1) poor, (0) terrible.
7. What are the hindrances to communication on a family level? List them.
8. Is there any person in your family with whom you have the most difficulty communicating? What can you do to break through the communication barrier? How can you improve the communication level of your family?
9. List at least 15 ways that you do or can show love to you children. Think especially in terms of your children's desires, likes, and dislikes. Think in terms of the various aspects of their lives.

## The Goal of Parenting

Primary Scripture: Ephesians 6:1-4

### Introduction

Proverbs 22:6, “Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it,” is one of the great commands of Scripture directed to parents. But is there anything more challenging or rewarding than this responsibility and privilege? Training children in the way they should go has always been a huge and vital task in every generation because of all that is involved in the process of nurturing children, but has there ever been a time when the challenge was greater than it is today? A child’s development and perspective about life is of course a product of the training process. It is here that children will develop their ideas about God, man, themselves (personal significance, source of security, purpose in life), and about society and its world viewpoint. But the more a society moves away from the truth of Scripture and its values, priorities, and beliefs, the more difficult the task of child training becomes. This is partly because of the negative influences and the centrifugal pulls on the child, but also because parents too often begin to think and act like their society. They take up its belief structures and live according to the values and priorities of society. The impact this has on the thinking and behavior of the children is tremendous and just a casual look at our world today tells the story. What a society believes will always determine how it lives. There is a flow to culture, and the river of this flow is always found in the headwaters of the thoughts of people. As the late Francis Schaeffer pointed out:

People have presuppositions, and they will live more consistently on the basis of these presuppositions than even they themselves may realize. By *presuppositions* we mean the basic way an individual looks at life, his basic worldview, the grid through which he sees the world. Presuppositions rest upon that which a person considers to be the truth of what exists. People’s presuppositions lay a grid for all they bring forth into the external world. Their presuppositions also provide the basis for their values and therefore the basis for their decisions.

“As a man thinketh, so is he,” is really most profound. An individual is not just the product of the forces around him. He has a mind, an inner world. Then, having thought, a person can bring forth actions into the external world and thus influence it.<sup>1</sup>

Our presuppositions, which determine our worldview, are usually picked up from the family. But there are many evil forces at work to influence the worldview of the family (parent and child alike) to turn it away from God’s truth as it is developed for us in the pages of the Word of God.

Child training is always a huge undertaking, but in view of the influences and powers at work in our world today, it has become a colossal task. It is not one that is impossible, however, because we have an all powerful and awesome God who has not only revealed Himself to us in Scripture and in the person of Christ, the Son of God, but He has given us special promises and directives for training and nurturing our children.

**The Goal of Parenting is:** *To be a faithful instrument in God’s hands for actively bringing up my child according to biblical principles.*

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<sup>1</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture*, Fleming H. Revell, Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1976, p. 19.

## God's Directions to Parents

Ephesians 6:4 says, *“Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”*

This is the directive that will help us reach our goal of being faithful, biblical parents. Parents are not infallible, but they are a child's primary God-given authority and source of training. This has always been the pattern.

Proverbs 4:1-4 says, *“Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding. I give you sound learning, so do not forsake my teaching. When I was a boy in my father's house, still tender, and an only child of my mother, he taught me and said, “Lay hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands and you will live.”*

### The Essence of God's Directions

In Ephesians 6:4, we have the key phrase, “bring them up.” This term means to rear, bring to maturity, provide, support. In this passage it would convey tenderly caring for the child by providing what the child needs to grow to maturity. Namely *what the child needs is discipline (training) and instruction.*

Parents are to “bring up” their child up actively, continuously, and with authority.

- Not the passive voice – “You children be brought up” (by environment, Sunday School, Public/Christian School, etc.).
- Not the middle voice – “Children, bring yourselves up.”
- But rather, the active voice – “You parents bring them up.”

### The Execution of God's Directions

Two key words in Ephesians 6:4 must be understood in order to fulfill God's directives which are discipline and instruction.

#### Discipline

#### Instruction

**Very Important:** Our discipline and instruction are not merely for the purpose of conforming our children to certain external standards of behavior

*Homework: Complete worksheet #2 over the next several weeks*

## How To Raise A Child For God – WORKSHEET #2

1. Examine your expectations for your child. Are they realistic? Evaluate them in the light of the Bible (I Cor. 13:11; Matt. 18:10; Gen. 33:12-14).
2. Love him unconditionally (Deut. 7:7; I John 4:10, 19).
3. Look for opportunities in which you can commend him. Express appreciation for him frequently (Phil. 1:3; I Thess. 1:2; II Thess. 1:3).
4. Seldom criticize without first expressing appreciation for good points (I Cor. 1:3-13).
5. Give him freedom to make decisions where serious issues are not at stake. Your goal should be to bring your child to maturity in Christ and not to dependence on you (Eph. 4:13-15; 6:4; Prov. 22:6; Col. 1:27, 28).
6. Do not compare him with others (Gal. 6:4; II Cor. 10:12,13; I Cor. 12:4-11).
7. Never mock him or make fun of him. Do not demean or belittle your child. Beware of calling him dumb or clumsy or stupid (Matt. 7:12; Eph. 4:29, 30; Col. 4:6; Prov. 12:18; 16:24).
8. Do not scold him in front of others (Matt. 16:22, 23; 18:15; I Cor. 16:14).
9. Never make threats or promises that you do not intend to keep (Matt. 5:37; James 5:12; Col. 3:9).
10. Don't be afraid to say "no," and when you say it, mean it (Prov. 22:15; 29:15; I Sam. 3:13; Gen. 18:19).
11. When your child has problems or is a problem, do not overreact or lose control of yourself. Do not yell or shout or scream at him (Eph. 4:26, 27; I Cor. 16:14; II Tim. 2:24, 25; I Tim. 5:1,2).
12. Communicate optimism and expectancy. Do not communicate by word or action that you have given up on your child and are resigned to his being a failure (Philem. 21; II Cor. 9:1, 2; I Cor. 13:7).
13. Make sure your child knows exactly what is expected of him. Most of the book of Proverbs is specific counsel from a father to his son.
14. Ask his advice-include him in some of the family planning (Rom. 1:11, 12; II Tim. 4:11; I Tim. 4:12; John 6:5).
15. When you make a mistake with your child, admit it and ask your child for forgiveness (Matt. 5:23, 24; James 5:16).

16. Have family conferences where you discuss:

- a. Family goals
- b. Family projects
- c. Vacations
- d. Devotions
- e. Chores
- f. Discipline
- g. Complaints
- h. Suggestions
- i. Problems

Welcome contributions from your child (Ps. 128; James 1:19; 3:13-18; Titus 1:6-8; Prov. 15:22).

17. Assess his areas of strength and then encourage him to develop them. Begin with one and encourage him to really develop in this area (II Tim. 1:16; 4:5; I Pet. 4:10).

18. Give him plenty of tender loving care. Be free in your expression of love by word and deed (I Cor. 13:1-8; 16:14; John 13: 34; I Thess. 2:7, 8).

19. Practice selective reinforcement. When your child does something well, commend him. Especially let him know when his attitude and effort are what they should be (I Thess. 1:3-10; Phil. 1:3-5; Col. 1:3,4; Eph. 1: 15).

20. Be more concerned about Christian attitudes and character than you are about performance or athletic skills or clothing or external beauty or intelligence (I Sam. 16:7; Gal. 5:22, 23; I Pet. 3:4, 5; Prov. 4:23; Matt. 23: 25-28).

21. Have a lot of fun with your child. Plan to have many fun times and many special events with your child. Make a list of fun things your family can do (Ps. 128; Prov. 5:15-18; 15:13; 17:22; Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21; Eccles. 3:4; Luke 15:22-24).

22. Help your child to learn responsibility by administering discipline fairly, consistently, lovingly, and promptly (I Sam. 3:13; Prov. 13:24; 19:18; 22:15).

23. Look upon your child as a human *becoming* as well as a human *being*. Look upon the task of raising children as a process which takes 18 to 19 years to complete (Eph. 6:4; Prov. 22:6; Gal. 6:9; I Cor. 15: 58; Isa. 28:9, 10).

24. Live your convictions consistently. Your child will learn more by observing your example than he will by listening to your words (Deut. 6:4-9; I Thess. 2:10-12; Phil. 4:9; II Tim. 1:5,7).

25. Recognize that you are responsible to prepare your child for life in this world and in the world to come (Eph. 6:4; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 78: 5-7; II Tim. 3:15-17).

26. Be very sensitive to the needs, feelings, fears, and opinions of your child (Matt. 18:10; Col. 3:21).

27. Treat the child as though he is important to you and accepted by you (Matt. 18:5-6).

28. Avoid the use of words expressing anger or exasperation (Prov. 15:1; Eph. 4:31,32).
29. Maintain the practice of daily Bible reading, discussions, and prayer (Deut. 6:4-9; II Tim. 3:15; Eph. 6:4; Ps. 1: 1-3; 78: 5-8; 119:9, 11).
30. Become thoroughly involved as a family in a biblical church (Heb. 10:24, 25; Eph. 4:11-16).
31. Make your home a center of Christian hospitality, where your child will be brought into frequent contact with many Christians (Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:1,2; II Kings 4:8-37).
32. Make it easy for your child to approach you with problems, difficulties, and concerns. Learn to be a good listener when he needs you. Give your child your undivided attention. Avoid being a mind reader or an interrupter or a critic. Show an interest in whatever interests your child. Make yourself available when your child needs you-even if you are busy (James 1:19, 20; 3:16-18; I John 3:16-18; I Cor. 9: 19-23; Phil. 2:3,4).
33. Seek to bring your child to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Become all things to your child that you might win your child to Christ. God, of course, must do the saving, bring conviction, give repentance and fait. You, however, may provide the environment in which God saves-by your prayers, godly speech and example, family devotions, and involvement in a sound biblical church (II Tim. 1:5-7; 3:14-17; Eph. 6:4; Deut. 6:4-9; Mark 10:13,14; Rom. 10:13-17; I Cor. 1:18-21).

## A Model of Fatherhood

Primary Scriptures: Ephesians 5:1-2

Youngsters ... get more information by observing those persons who are close to them. Children tend to value what they see their parents valuing. If there happens to be consistency between what the parents say they value and what they show, this value will become strong in the life of the child. If there is no consistency, the child will become even more confused.

(Earl Wilson, *You Try Being A Teenager*, p. 114)

### Love: The Context

*He who spares his rod hates his son,  
But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.*

(Proverbs 13:24)

This well-known, but often neglected proverb teaches us love provides the vital context for the training process regardless of which side of the corral is in view. It demands that everything parents do in the training of their children must be done in an atmosphere of love. All the ingredients of the training corral need to flow from an interpersonal and intimate relationship of **biblical** love and caring.

The fundamental concept is this: **Truth** is the **seed** (the **content** for training) and **Love** is the **soil** (the **context** in which the training must occur).

Of all the ingredients of the training process, love is the most essential. Love is the source from which all the other aspects of training must flow. Love provides the proper atmosphere in which dedication, discipline, instruction, and example must operate. Why? Because if genuine and biblical love is present, the others will also be properly present. If they are not, then love is not really present—at least not a biblical kind of love. Because of the messed up ideas about love in our society, it is imperative that we understand the head waters from which the river of love must flow. The fountain head for love must be the absolutes of the Word of God and not our feelings or ideas about love, otherwise love becomes no more than soft sentimentality or permissiveness. Without a knowledge and application of the Scripture, love will lack the stamina, the direction, and character it needs to love in truth and effectively.

### The Example of our Heavenly Parent

*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;  
and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself  
up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.*

(Ephesians 5:1-2)

Our heavenly Parent provides the perfect pattern for us as earthly parents. As God loved and loves us, so we should express our love to our children as well as to one another. But how is this done? God has expressed His love by:

- ❑ **Salvation**—He gave us His beloved Son as the sacrifice for our sin that we might have life and life abundant (John 3:16).
- ❑ **Instruction**—He has given us the Living Word (His Son) and His written Word (the Bible) to deliver and guide our lives.
- ❑ **Personal Provision**—As a loving Father, He watches after us, He knows our real needs even before we ask and He intimately cares for us (Matt. 6:8, 32; 7:7-11; Phil. 4:19; 1 Pet. 5:7).
- ❑ **Example**—God expresses His love by the example of His own holy life which we are to imitate as it is revealed in Scripture (Eph. 5:1-2; 1 Pet. 1:14-15).
- ❑ **Discipline**—God expresses His love by His loving discipline to aid in our spiritual growth and change that we might experience His goodness and righteousness (Heb. 12:5f).
- ❑ **Patience**—As a Father who knows His children, He understands our nature and treats us accordingly in grace and mercy (Ps. 103:9-14).
- ❑ **Rewards**—He rewards His children for faithful service in heaven (Matt. 6:1).

**Psalm 103:8-14** Let's note some lessons we can learn regarding God's example for us as our Father:

- ❑ **Though God disciplines as a Father, He is always compassionate and forgiving** (verses 8-9). As God does not continue to strive with us, so fathers must learn to forgive and let it go. After parents discipline a child, they must not continue to bring up the child's failures.
- ❑ **God doesn't treat us according to what we deserve, but in grace He deals with us according to our needs** (verse 10). This doesn't mean God ignores our sin, but He disciplines us according to the purposes spelled out in Hebrews 12:5f and Proverbs 3:11, the partaking of His holiness.
- ❑ **God's loving kindness (steadfast love) is measured not by our behavior, but by His character** (verse 11). So parents need to discipline their children from the source of godly character, i.e., out of an abiding walk with the Lord.
- ❑ **As God treats us in grace, forgives us our sin, and is free to do so because of His work in Christ, so fathers must forgive their children because God has forgiven them in Christ** (verse 12). Discipline should never be done to make a child pay for his sin for only Christ can truly pay for our sin. While discipline does teach the truth that sin has consequences (we reap what we sow), the goal in view is godliness, change from the inside out.
- ❑ **God's understanding and patience toward us is like a father who is ever mindful of a child's humanity.** He is aware of the battle His children are going through with personal temptations and weaknesses (verses 13-14).

All these acts flow from the steadfast love and concern of God. They are the product of His intimate involvement with our lives. They are personal acts of God's love as our heavenly Father. So likewise, to imitate our heavenly Parent, parents must walk in love, in mercy, in patience, and in understanding as they seek to train and nurture their children by instruction, provision, example, and discipline.

## The Principle of Sowing and Reaping

### Positive/Preventive Discipline

Positive preventive discipline is accomplished by words and deeds, instruction backed up by example. It involves the formal and informal communication of biblical truth concerning God, man, sin, salvation, fellowship with God, ministry, and loving others, i.e., the basics of the Word including the evidences that support the claims of Christianity.

The basic principles used to reinforce the rules should communicate spiritual and moral values that express love and submission to God, concern for others (family, neighbors, etc.), personal significance as one created in God's image with purpose and meaning in life, the truth that our behavior has consequences (the laws of sowing and reaping), and other biblical truth according to the age level of the child.

### Some Illustrations of Principles

- (1) *The principle of helpfulness.* "All things are lawful, but not all things build up or edify. All things are not profitable" (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23).
- (2) *The principle of love or consideration of others* (Matt. 7:12; 1 Cor. 10:24; Phil. 2:2-4; Rom. 14:15; 1 Jn. 4:7).
- (3) *The principle of orderliness.* Paul says, "do all things decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40).
- (4) *The principle of respect for the privacy and property of others* (2 Thess. 3:11; 1 Tim. 5:13; 1 Pet. 4:15).
- (5) *The principle of respect for authority and God's chains of command* (Eph. 6:1, 2; 1 Tim. 5:1; Tit. 3:1; 1 Pet. 5:5)..

Two of the prominent words of Scripture are *obey* or *obedience* and *rebel* or *rebellion*. Satan is the first rebel and the rebel of rebels. When we allow rebellion in our children, we are playing right into his hands. If a parent can't talk on the phone or visit with a friend in their home because they have to keep running around after their kids trying to corral them like wild mustangs, that parent is guilty of failing to enforce the above principles. Things are out of control. Their kids are outside the corral; there is no respect for authority, no consideration of others, no orderliness, and no helpfulness.

### Negative/Corrective Discipline

The negative or corrective side of discipline includes admonishment and chastening. It is designed to be applied with instruction after wrong has been done in order to stop bad behavior and to aid in establishing inner controls.

Discipline in the form of chastening should never be done to make a child pay for his sins, but to correct bad behavior and to promote good behavior. In this sense, discipline must always include instruction. *Instruction* is aimed at the understanding and the emotions of the child, whereas, *physical discipline and admonishment* is aimed at the will. It reinforces and drives home the lesson that disobedience or sin has its consequences—and in an unforgettable way if administered properly.

## **The Form of Discipline God Has Chosen**

To discipline biblically and thus properly, a parent must understand, trust in, and use the form God has ordained in Scripture. But because of a permissive society that has elevated man's opinion above Scripture, many parents have a tough time accepting what the Bible teaches on this subject. So, what form has God chosen according to the Bible? "The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother" (Proverbs 29:15).

**Scriptural Mandate:** Proverbs 1:7; 15:33; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15

*The thrust here is not punishment, and not merely scolding, or warnings, or instruction, or even restrictions, but discipline which uses the rod, when needed, in connection with each of these methods as a part of a parent's tool chest for training and building biblical principles into the life of a child.*

## **The Aims of Discipline**

(1) *Godliness or Christ-like character (Hebrews 12:10-11)*

(2) *Obedient Actions with Happy Attitudes. **Obedience is the quick, willing and complete response to a parent's orders or directions** when asked to do something in a reasonable tone of voice, not from yelling or screaming or from several repetitions or threats.*

Obedience involves three things:

*a. Immediacy:* Children must learn to obey immediately rather than put off what the parent has asked them to do.

*b. Completeness:* Obedience includes thorough and complete obedience according to the age level or capacity of the child. 1 Corinthians 10:31; 14:40; Colossians 3:22-24.

*c. Willingness and a Good Attitude:* Scripture teaches us, "serve the Lord with gladness" (Ps. 100:2), and "do all things heartily (with a right mental attitude) as to the Lord" (Col. 3:23). This means children must be taught that obedience to a parent, to a teacher, to an employer, etc., is an obedience to the Lord and to fail to obey joyfully is rebellion and to act like the devil himself who is the rebel of rebels..

## **Some Guidelines for Discipline**

(1) Since disobedience is primarily and first of all against God, children should not be disciplined because they have embarrassed you.

(2) Don't discipline children for being themselves or because they have not come up to the capabilities of a brother or sister.

(3) Do not discipline a child for something that is beyond his or her level of growth or for something for which he simply is not capable.

(4) Do not use scorn or ridicule especially in areas of weakness.

(5) Do not discipline when you are angry and out of control

(6) Don't discipline for legitimate forgetfulness, but do watch for patterns that may develop.

(7) Never use the withdrawal of affection or attention with your discipline.

(8) Avoid unnecessary clashes of the will.

(9) Avoid excessive criticism.

(10) Don't discipline when you are uncertain of the issue.

## **Proverbs 13:24 can be summarized as follows:**

(1) A lack of discipline (including discipline with a rod) is a lack of genuine love and concern for the child's well being. (2) Discipline should begin early in a child's life, as soon as disobedience and rebelliousness are observed. (3) Discipline needs to be consistent to have its greatest impact. (4) Finally and most importantly, discipline, if it is to be effective, needs the context of love from a parent who is under control.

## Servanthood

**G<sub>2</sub> Ministries . . .** The motivation in all that we do should come out of two commands: **Loving God** and **Loving People**. These are the two greatest commands in Scripture. All of Christianity can be answered in the fulfillment of these two commands.

### **Teaching Your Child To Love and Serve others . . .**

Biblical love means *sacrificial giving without a motive for any reciprocation*- love of the unlovely, or love of the unworthy.

Loving others Christ's way isn't based on their merit but on His example of loving us while we were still sinners (Rom. 5:8). And a sinner showing love and deference to other sinners is a powerful testimony to the world.

*Do nothing from selfishness and empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself (Philippians 2:3).*

Our love for others should follow God's example (Jeremiah 31:3; Matthew 5:44; Mark 10:42-45; John 3:16; 10:11; 15:13; Philippians 2:3-9).

Note these characteristics of Christ's earthly ministry:

- He was not selfish; He was generous.
- He showed that the way to gain is to give up one's "rights."
- He met the genuine needs of others at His own expense.
- He chose to view others' interests as more important than His own.
- He was impartial in His sacrifice.

Christ's example is the opposite of the selfish tendency of children. For example, beware of your children playing favorites with one another or selfishly ignoring their little brothers while their buddies come over (James 2:9).

How does your child respond when someone . . .

- Takes a toy out of his hand?
- Jumps on his new bike without asking?
- Says, "Can I be first instead of you?"
- Says, "Your piece is bigger, can I have it?" etc.

Agape love involves being considerate and showing kindness (e.g., table manners, emptying the trash even though it's not your "job," cleaning up someone else's spilt milk without being asked, letting a brother or a sister have the last cookie, etc.)

Agape love includes forbearance (Ephesians 4:1-2); being tolerant. Beware of your children being overly picky about their own personal preferences at the expense of others' interests (e.g., when a child has to play the game his way).

In Philippians 2:3, Paul speaks about "selfish ambition." Agape love excludes having an overly critical spirit. Teach your children God's standard of agape love in I Corinthians 13: "bears all things, hopes all things, endures all things." Loving and serving in the home is the training ground for friendships, and later, marriage

**Developing a biblical work ethic** *Excerpted from Biblical Parenting for Life, John Mac Arthur*

**The Sluggard**

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Slothful, Lazy

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**Bad**

Irresponsible  
*Does it later or not at all*  
*Does it slowly*  
*Gets distracted*

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Proverbs 21:25  
Proverbs 26:14  
Proverbs 19:15

**The Servant**

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Diligent, Persevering

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**Good**

Responsible  
*Fulfills duty,*  
*Faithfully does*  
*what is asked*

*Is good (but Christ)*  
*points out that we*  
*do not receive any*  
*special reward)*

**Better**

More Responsible  
*Does regular things*  
*without being asked*

*Maturity level*  
*is increasing*

**Best**

Most Responsible  
*Does new tasks*  
*on own,*  
*A self-starter*

*Sees needs and*  
*seeks to meet*  
*them.*  
*Sensitive to*  
*others,*  
*Motivated by love*

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Luke 17:7-10  
Ecclesiastes 9:10  
Colossians 3:23  
Luke 10:34

**Why A biblical work ethic?**

Work is a part of God’s plan for everyone, including young children. A child’s tendency to waste time can lead to poor work habits and laziness. Help your child learn the answers to the following questions:

♥ *When do we work? Most of the time. Six days thou shalt labor (Exodus 20:9).*

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It may be helpful to establish a schedule of regular chores for your children. In addition, teach your child the importance of showing initiative (identifying and completing tasks without being asked). In Proverbs 6:7, the ant is considered a wise example of fulfilling responsibility without external prompting.

♥ *How do we work?*

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*...heartily, as unto the Lord, not unto men (Colossians 3:23). Whatever is in your hand to do, do it with all your might. (Ecclesiastes 9:10).*

Children need to work diligently and responsibly, persevering until the task is completed. Do not tolerate a sloppy, half-hearted effort or an attitude that appears “sour” (whining or complaining).

♥ *Why do we work?*

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First of all, to please the Lord (Colossians 3:23).

In addition, work is God’s primary way of meeting our own needs (2 Thessalonians 3:10) and the needs of others (Ephesians 4:28). It is an opportunity (not a drudgery) to help others and be productive.

Children should learn from the earliest years that hard work is a part of life, and they must practice being diligent in all they do. When they are very young, they can learn to clean up after themselves and help with work around the house. As they get older they can even take on responsibility outside the home. God is pleased when we work diligently rather than begrudgingly. **Children, like parents, must learn not to make an idol out of leisure.**

## Disciple Makers

### A Call to Balance in Parenting

#### ➤ External and Internal (Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-6)

For example, a parent can simply focus on the external justice and fairness involved in a fight over a toy and simply decides who had it first, or get a watch to time them each for a turn. That might help a two year old whose reasoning is still limited. But children need to be patiently and lovingly led to learn to give up their “rights” and prefer others in love, not just “take turns” (From Tedd Tripp’s book *Shepherding Your Child’s Heart*, p. 21).

You don’t want to train a child to become a Pharisee, where everything looks good on the outside but inwardly is corrupt (Matthew 23:23-24, 27-28).

#### ➤ Freedom and Responsibility (Galatians 5:13-14; I Peter 2:16)

This means giving too much freedom on the one hand with no balancing restrictions and responsibilities on the other. Don’t give too much freedom too soon. Children need parental guidance to teach them how to have victory over selfish desires. A parent should allow a child more freedom as the child learns self-control, thus demonstrating responsibility. Extending privileges teaches the sowing and reaping principle (Gal. 6:7).

Sometimes a parent becomes unnecessarily controlling or overbearing, not allowing the child the freedom to fail. But a wise parent understands the value of learning from mistakes.

#### ➤ Friendship and Authority

It is a great joy to know that Jesus is our dearest friend. In fact, He beckons us to come boldly and freely to him to receive help in our times of need (Hebrews 4:15-16). But this confidence to approach Christ must never cause us to lose our sense of awe and respect for Him. In other words, we must never be presumptuous in any way in our relationship with Him. Jesus is our friend, but He is also our Lord.

In like manner, friendship is an aspect of the relationship parents enjoy with their children. We love our children dearly, and they become closer companions (and even peers) as time goes on. But a proper balance must exist between our friendship with our children and our authority over them.

➤ **Major Issues and Minor Issues**

“Straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel...”

It is easy to become overbearing, majoring on issues that are not clearly biblical. Issues of the heart are major issues. Selfishness is a heart issue, grooming may not be.

➤ **Parenting as the sole focus of the Christian life vs. parenting as an important aspect of the Christian life (I Corinthians 10:31)**

As Christians we should have a biblically accurate perspective of our priorities....

**The Making of a Disciple II Timothy 2:1-11**

## Parenting - WORKSHEET #3

1. Consider your parental goals. What qualities do you want to see developed in your children? By the time they are 21 or 22, what kind of persons would you like them to be? What do you hope will have been accomplished? What do you desire they will be prepared to be or do?
2. Compare your goals that God has for His children. Study the following verses and notice what God wants His children to become. Certainly our goals and His goals should coincide (Matt. 28:19,20; Exod. 20:1-17; Matt. 22:36-40; Eph. 4:1-6, 20; Rom. 12:1-15:7; I Cor. 13; Phil 2:1-18; 4:1-9; Matt. 5:1-7:27; Luke 6:27-49; Gal. 5:13-6:10).
3. Discuss and write down how you will attempt to assist your children to become and do everything that God wants them to be and do. (Study Phil. 4:9; II Tim. 1:5, 3:15-17; Deut. 6:4-9; Heb. 12:5-11; Prov. 3:11,12; 1:8,9; 22:6, 15, 24, 25; 13:20, 24; 29:15; Eph. 6:4; I Tim. 4:16; 5:8; I Cor. 15:33, Gal. 6:7,8).
4. Examine the kind of discipline you are giving to your children. Discuss and write down your answers to the following questions:
  - a. What are your children's chores and responsibilities? Do you know? Do they?
  - b. What are your disciplinary rules and procedures? Do you know what you expect in specific terms? Do they? Children must know clearly what is expected of them and what will happen if they obey or disobey. Are your expectations realistic and rewards and corrections appropriate?
  - c. Do you administer discipline consistently and sufficiently?
  - d. Do you administer discipline fairly with instruction and love?
  - e. Do you impart the idea that you expect obedience and put the prescribed discipline into effect when the child does not immediately obey?
  - f. Do you and your mate agree on your expectations and the mechanics of discipline? Don't expect your children to obey or agree or respond to your discipline if you and your mate do not support each other.
  - g. Do you really make obedience attractive? Do you think of discipline positively or merely negatively?
5. Study Deuteronomy 6:4-9.
  - a. List the parental responsibilities mentioned in this passage.
  - b. Discuss how you are fulfilling the parental responsibilities mentioned here. What else could you do?
6. Examine what you are teaching your children about the following areas or subjects by your example:
  - a. Loyalty and devotion to God.
  - b. Sex
  - c. Work
  - d. Money
  - e. Time
  - f. Marriage
  - g. How to treat parents

- h. Being a neighbor
- i. Spiritual mindedness
- j. Honesty and truthfulness
- k. What is really important in life
- l. Self-control
- m. Church attendance and involvement
- n. Respect and concern for other people
- o. How to face and solve problems
- p. How to react to criticism
- q. Bible reading and study
- r. Decision making
- s. Prayer
- t. Others \_\_\_\_\_

7. Select areas in which you should become a better example. Ask God for help and go to work!