

**THE ART OF PARENTING
FROM BONDAGE TO LIBERTY
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A group of professionals posed this question to a group 4-8 year olds. What does love mean?

- When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You know that your name is safe in their mouth.
- Love is when a girl puts on perfume and boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other.
- Love is what makes you smile when you're tired.
- Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen.
- Love is like a little old woman and little old man who are still friends even after they know each other so well.
- I know my older sister loves me because she gives me all her old clothes and has to go out and buy new ones.

The thing all of these have in common is that their beliefs about love were first being formed in their homes...

As children are growing up, they are rapidly building their "belief system" about themselves and about life. They are tape-recording and storing in their cognitive computer banks all the important information for how to live life.

While few parents would intentionally cultivate patterns of insecurity, anxiety, frustration... sometimes we fall prey to "worldly wisdom" and foist it upon our children without realizing the negative effects it has.

Gal 5:1

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

We live in a world that tends to pull people into bondage.... Bondage to addictions, bondage anxiety, fear... and away from a life of freedom in Christ.

In today's world there are many outside pressures making the home less and less a refuge... and more and more a yoke that pulls the home down.

T>>

This morning I want to talk about making our homes places that reflect Gal 5:1

(ILL)

We live in a world that operates on the premise of "doing" things in order to be "okay." Performance = Worthiness.

Titus 3:5

“he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.

Q: What would happen if we cultivated homes that reflected this passage.

1. Build a home of Being –vs- Doing

It’s essential to keep the correct perspective on this. Intimate relationships are founded upon **first being** accepted; loved and valued... then a desire to “do” things consistent with acceptance and love.

Q: What did we do to receive the acceptance, kindness, and love of God? The answer is easy... We did nothing!!!

(Story)

Abby got an apple juice, and Flannery got a mango surprise. His my daughters had brought all their money, a combined total of about 80 cents. One of them said, "I want to pay for mine." I assured her, "Daddy's gonna get it." Nonetheless, she insisted, "I'm paying for mine." "That'll be \$2.06," and she put her change on the counter. "Um, that's...that's not enough," the clerk responded. I felt a little tug at my sweater from my other daughter. I looked down, and she said, "I think I'd like to use your money."

2 Cor 1:3

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,”

↳ God loves to comfort and care for us... It’s something he does freely.

2 Cor 1:4

“... who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.”

- This is an amazing truth for parenting and grand parenting.

You can comfort your child with the comfort you yourself have received. God wants us to pass it on.

Application:

You can go out of your way to tell your children you love them.

Tell your children you’re proud of them, when they haven’t done anything in particular.

↳ I suppose you could even do this with your spouse, or with a friend.

- Love is at its best when it is neither deserved nor earned.

(Story) One child said “love is when my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn’t bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That’s love.”
↳ That’s a child who will know how to love someday

I hope that’ll me Angie and me someday.

2. Build a Home of Gratefulness

Gratefulness and contentment are not natural traits in children. If they grow up and are unable to feel grateful for what they have, they will never be content with their life... That’s bondage...

They will always be in bondage for the need to get, or being something else.
This is something we can change.

(Brain) Brain – Research is now showing that in the early years of life parts of the brain can actually be developed.
Left Pre-frontal Lobe of your brain sends positive emotional messages to rest of your brain that helps you see the positive side of life.

Right Pre – frontal lobe of you brain sends negative messages to your brain. As a kind of alarm system.

i.e. If a bear is trying to eat you... it’s good to feel anxiety and discomfort... we call that healthy.

~ Now I’m going to over simplify this for time, but far to many children today have there mind flooded with a constant stream of activity from the their Rt Pre-Frontal lobe.

It will cause a constant low-level stream of anxiety to fill their mind all the time. It robs them of contentment and joy.

~ Researchers are finding that brain is cultivated. I can cultivate gratefulness into the mind of my children.

As a parent, I can trigger activity in the L Pre-Frontal lobe.

- ✓ When I hug them for no reason.
- ✓ When I tell them how grateful I am to have them as my children.
- ✓ When they hear Angie and me share complements at the dinner table.
- ✓ Prayer time at night – going through the day to thank God for all the things were grateful for.

(Story) I want bubba to pray for me, Oh I’ll pray for you
We are jumping up and down inside... get the video camria... it’s a miracle

3. Build a Home of Faith

Isn't this true – We want faith shaped children – but There's an irrefutable truth about parenting here...

Children grow up forming their passions around their parent's passions. A child's faith is shaped through a relational grid....

Simple but profound truth. – The way we cultivate faith-shaped children is by actually being faith-shaped parents.

- ✓ If the only time you talk about God is on Sunday...
Don't be surprised when your children grow-up to be Sunday Christians – who go to church, but live anyway they want Mon through Sat.
- ✓ If you open yourself up to a vulnerable life with God... allowing your spiritual walk to actually change you...
Guess what your children might actually grow up with a kind of constant sensitivity to God... It could actually become a way of life for them.

(Music)

Everclear – Very talented group of young men. The lead singer grew up in a home of relational bondage. A home filled with pain.

Song about his father:

I remember blue skies, walking the block
I loved it when you held me high, I loved to hear you talk,
You would take me to the movie, you would take me to the beach,
You would take me to a place inside that is so hard to reach.

Father of mine, tell me where did you go, you had the world inside your hand,
But you did not seem to know, father of mine, tell me what do you see,
when you look back at your wasted life, and you don't see me.

I was ten years old, doing all that I could,
sometimes you would send me a birthday card with a 5 dollar bill.
I never understood you then, and I guess I never will

Daddy gave me a name, my dad, he gave me a name, then he walked away.

Song about his mom:

I wish I believed like you do, yeah you,
 In the myth of a merciful God, in the myth of a heaven and hell,
 I hear the voices you hear sometimes, sometimes it gets so much,
 I feel like letting go, sometimes it gets so hard, I feel like letting it go

I heard the truth about you and it really doesn't read at all like the whipping stick
 you raised me with,
 a scared woman in a private hell, hushed voice like electric bells.

(The name of the song is: "Why I don't Believe in God")

the song never talks about God, just his mom.

- To a child God looks a lot like mom & dad.

Parents, you don't have to be perfect! Not Even Close!!! And your children
 aren't going to be perfect... However; You have the power to shape the deepest
 parts of their young lives.

To point them toward deep bondage, or life-giving freedom...

T>> Paul says in Ephesians 4 we have we have a calling to be something divinely
 important.

↳ Parents, you can bring this out in your children by...

4. Build a Home of Affirmation

Most of us think of affirming positive behaviors in our children.... Which is a
 great thing!!!

(ILL) Potty training, running down the hall trying to catch the moment before it's
 gone... if you know what I mean?

(ILL) Finding *at least* one piece of clothing that you like about your teen-age
 daughter's out-fit.
 "What do you think daddy?" "Are... other people going to be where you're
 going?"

Allow me to encourage all of us to also affirm our children, spouse, and friends
 about their character as well...

- The beauty of character is that it gives a young person the freedom to make
 choices, and not be in bondage to the lusts of this world.

- Expressing appreciation for a child's character strengths – affirms their divinely declared worth...
It gives them a sense of value that is not easily lost.

Insert

Review the list of character traits

(Story)

Sister Helen Mrosia writes: In the early 60's

By Friday the students were getting cranky. So, for a break, I asked them to write the nicest thing they could about the character of each student and hand it in. I compiled the results for each student and, on Monday, gave out the lists. So that each student had a list of what the other students in the class had affirmed in them.

Several years later one of the students was killed in Vietnam. After the funeral, most of his former classmates gathered with Mark's parents and me for lunch. Mark's father took a wallet out of his pocket. "They found this on Mark when he was killed," he said. He carefully removed a folded, refolded, and taped paper—the one on which I'd listed the good things Mark's classmates had said about him.

Charlie smiled sheepishly and said, "I keep my list in my desk drawer."
Chuck's wife said, "Chuck put his in our wedding album."

"I have mine, too," Marilyn said, "in my diary."
Vicky reached into her pocketbook and brought out her frazzled list.

~ Everyone needs Affirmation...