

THE ART OF PARENTING
MY CHILD AND ME
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Good parenting is not a hard and fast set of rules to be applied like unchanging math theorems to a particular set of problems.

Good parenting is not an intellectual endeavor—otherwise the smart people would be the best parents. Good parenting is an art.

May I invite you to turn for a few moments in our Father's Word to Deuteronomy? I want to direct your attention to chapter 6.

The Israelites are standing on the threshold of entering the Promised Land. Moses is allowed in grace to see the land; but he is never allowed to enter it because of his own disobedience. Moses is delivering his magnificent obsession to the people of Israel before they enter the Land. The amazing thing to me is that right at the outset of a series of messages that are designed to prepare a new generation to enter the Land, the most prominent subject should be ... the subject of the home.

- SLIDE #: DEUTERONOMY 6:4-6: Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.
- SLIDE #: DEUTERONOMY 6:7: Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.
- SLIDE #: DEUTERONOMY 6:8-9: Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

I want you to write three words in the margin of your bible that will summarize for you what Moses wanted to inculcate in his generation and what it is that I believe the HS wants to weave into the fabric of our thinking in our own generation.

By verses 4-6 write Heart: Know and experience both God's heart and mine.

By verse 7 write Home: Know and experience each of my children in my home.

By verses 8-9 write Habit: Know and experience God's principles of life.

- SLIDE #: In Deuteronomy 6:4-9 we find the biblical foundation for *the Art of Parenting*. Moses lays down the principles for having a godly home and for raising godly children.

What he is explaining is the imprinting of children so that they will respond in a predictable way when they grow up.

If you don't imprint them, TV will. TV today is teaching our children morals and values—and theology. Many children spend more time with TV than with mom and dad.

You want to imprint what? Godly values and ethics and morals... and a relationship set that enables them to thrive with God and others.

Children learn ½ of all they will ever learn by the age of 6. Astounding. No. It is during the first 6 years that the brain is continuing to develop and pattern itself with the organization it will use for a lifetime.

Personality 85% set by 12. 95% set by 18.

Baby with eye infection. Doctor bandaged eyes for 2 weeks. Child was blind for life. Crucial 2 week period after birth that occipital lobe connects with info from seeing eyes to pattern it for life. Missed it.

Dogs leave nest at 49 days. Take them too early, miss play and aggression patterning. Never house train.

Mom keeps children in cages for first 5 years of life. Can't talk. Send them to school. They will get over it. No. Never. Grammar is patterned during the first five years. Never understand basic grammar for language.

Frontal lobe of the brain is moral values and choice. Not fully developed in females until 16 to 18. Males from 18 to 22. "Why did you do that? His brain is not working right. That's why careful parenting is so important in those early years.

God is very intentional about the imprinting that is to occur in the home in the first 18 years. Look at all the action verbs in these verses.

Let's go to verses 4-6 and talk about imprinting on the heart.

●SLIDE #: 1. GOD'S TRUTH MUST BE IMPRINTED IN THE HEART.

●SLIDE #: DEUTERONOMY 6:4-6.

"Up on your heart" in Hebrew means "weight, burden or concern.

●SLIDE #: Proverbs 4:23: Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

●SLIDE #: Proverbs 27:19: As water reflects a face, so a man's heart reflects the man.

God's Word is life: Spirit = Breath

Clancy: Casual about the Word of God, came to church, etc. until disaster struck our family. Now serious; it is our very life.

●SLIDE #: If we are not careful, if we neglect the fresh air, carbon monoxide poisoning slowly slip into drowsy lethargy. (We have to keep breathing.)

●SLIDE #: *WE MUST KNOW AND EXPERIENCE THE REAL GOD IN OUR HEARTS.*

If you do much flying you ignore the flight attendant announcements at the beginning of the flight.

How to put on seat belt, over water, etc.

Brianna and I playing empty as flight attendant droned on...

Airplane oxygen mask illustration: In case of cabin depressurization, oxygen masks fall from compartment above you. Pull down, cover mouth and nose, breathe normally, oxygen will be flowing even though bag does not inflate. If you are traveling with small children, put on your mask first, then attend to your child.

Suddenly flight attendant was standing over me. Thought she had me. Angry look, "OK Mr. Know it all, don't need to listen to our instructions, if we lose cabin pressure and oxygen masks fall out, whose do you put on first, yours? Or hers?"

"Well, mine, of course."

This goes against our natural parental instincts. We tend to think that we must take care of our children first. Yet, the airline says, take care of you first.

The reasoning is simple: If we don't receive the breath of life to sustain us, we won't be able to assist our children.

The spiritual connection is obvious, If we neglect the life-giving breath of God in our lives, we will promote the spiritual death of both parent and child. Take deep spiritual breaths. Our children are counting on it.

Parents have an absolute obligation to introduce their children to god in their formative years.

This is perhaps our most important responsibility in life. It exceeds all professional obligations and everything else. We must use every means at our disposal.

There is a humanistic notion today among behavioral scientists, psychologists, and psychiatrists that we don't have a right as parents to teach children what they ought to believe about religion. We are to remain silent and let them make up their own little minds later.

If we follow that advice and wait until the child is 10 or 12 before we begin to teach them spiritual values, we will have already taught them.

We have taught them by our silence on the subject that God is not important to us!

There is a time in the child's life when he is listening to what his parents have to say—when the imprinting is going on.

There is a time when he wants to know what they believe...what is black and white and what's in between... what sin is...who God is and what God wants.

There is a time to teach all that-when the clay is still pliable...when we can mold and shape it.

If we let the opportunity of those years slide by, then it becomes very difficult and perhaps even impossible later on to build in a value system and introduce that child to Christ when you didn't do the job in the earlier years.

We take our kids to the doctor to get vaccinated. We don't want them to get polio. We would not think of sending our kids out into the world unvaccinated.

Take them to church to get them vaccinated against unhealthy choices.

We want to help them develop a heart for Jesus Christ.

- SLIDE #: WE MUST KNOW AND EXPERIENCE WHAT IS OCCURRING WITH OURSELVES IN OUR HEARTS (SELF AWARENESS).

- SLIDE #: You See, Whatever Is In My Heart Will Soon Be In My Children's Hearts.

What bugs you so much about your children? Is it that they remind you so much of your self? "Why are you acting like that, Son?" "Just a chip off the old block!"

Story of rude lady at conference wanting to ask a question: Saw her coming, pushed over a man holding notes, spilled them all over the floor. She punctuated two or three conversational groups and then came right into the group I was in.

She interrupted: "I have a question." "Just a moment, Madam, I will try to answer your question in just a moment." She fidgeted and fumed. Finally, I said, "OK, what is your question?" "What I'd like to know is, "How can I make my children more patient?"

I don't know if you know that preachers have temptations. I had one then, but, fortunately, on this occasion I resisted. "Do you want your children to be more patient? Then you be more patient. Do you want them to be more kind and thoughtful? Then you be more kind and thoughtful. Pray for God to develop patience and kindness and thoughtfulness in you."

Mark The Connection, If It Is Not In Your Heart, It Will Never Be In Your Home Because ... Your Home Is Where Your Heart Is Revealed.

Do you realize that the easiest assignment for me is to stand here and talk to you today about the subject of the Xn home. The really rough assignment is to walk in my front door at 1 p.m. and live this stuff. See, I can pull the wool over your eyes like crazy. But, I can't fool my wife or children. They live with me. They know whether this stuff is in my heart or not.

- SLIDE #: 2. GOD'S TRUTH MUST BE IN THE HOME. Let's see what is going on in the home.
- SLIDE #: DEUTERONOMY 6:7.

The word "impress" means "to cause to learn." It means "to teach." Teaching is causing a person to know. Refers to formal teaching and instruction! "Talk" means informal instruction through conversation and circumstances that is more caught than taught.

Let's talk about what is going on inside the home.

- SLIDE #: God's truth must be in the home, but what if Dad is not in the home.
- SLIDE #: Many of you are single parents. I am convinced you have the hardest job in America. Have to provide the financial stability, run the home, and have time to parent the children. Julie on a teaching trip. I was a single parent for a week. Awful. Wore me out.

Don't parent alone. Develop a support system: Older women teach and mentor younger women. Adopt grand parents. Male role models at Casas. Kid's Central.

- SLIDE #: By the way, be careful what you let into your home. Internet controls: lack of attention; they are lonely.
- SLIDE #: Inside our home, WE MUST KNOW AND EXPERIENCE OUR CHILDREN.
- SLIDE #: Proverbs: 20:5: The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out.
- SLIDE #: Every child is different.
- SLIDE #: Psalm 127:3: "Children are a gift from the Lord."

Too many of them are unopened packages.

David tell of seeing A LITTLE THREE YEAR OLD BOY A FEW YEARS AGO WHO WAS HAVING TERRIBLE IMPULSE CONTROL PROBLEMS. Dad brought this little 3 year old who was having terrible temper tantrums. At times he would clench his fists and knock holes in the wall or take his head and beat it into the wall.

Dave met them and told them to play for a few moments in the play room while he observed next door. Observation room had a one way mirror. Dad and Johnny went into the room filled with puzzles and games to play. Dad came in and pulled up a chair and sat down. A Velcro dartboard was on the wall with the little Velcro darts. Daddy said, "Johnny run and get the darts." Johnny got the darts and dad sat in the chair and threw darts at the dartboard and Johnny ran and retrieved the darts and brought them back to dad. That was called playing.

After about a minute Johnny was sick of that. Johnny wanted to play with toys and games, "Dad come play with puzzles, Dad look at the puzzles!"

"Nah, you've got those at home Johnny! Let's play darts."

"Dad, look at these games!"

"Nah, you've got that at home."

Johnny saw a set of Ninja Turtles on the floor. Leonardo and the little turtle house, or sewer, I guess it was, Johnny got down on the floor. "Come on, Dad, play with this."

"Nah, Nah, I don't want to get down on the floor. Let's play darts."

About that time Johnny gets red in the face and clenches his fists. We are about to have an impulse control problem right there in the room.

At this point dad remembers that there is a counselor watching through the one-way mirror: "I better do something." So Dad says to Johnny, don't get mad, don't get mad, settle down, settle down, it is going to be O.K." Then he said this to him, "don't get mad because tomorrow I will take you to a University of Texas basketball game."

That dad may have taken that 3 year old to a UT basketball game for two hours, checked it off his list and said, "Boy, aren't I a good dad," but that dad never entered into that little boy's world. He never let his adult world enter into that little boy's world.

●SLIDE #: A good child is not the product of an accident. It is the product of cultivation.

Once when I was a children's pastor in Dallas a man and his wife were having a terrible time with their children. They called me over for counseling. We talked for a while about how to handle some of their problems. Finally the father escorted me to the front door. We stepped out on his lovely green lawn. It was August and it was hot in Dallas.

He said to me, "You know, some people have the most wonderful children. You know, some have them and some don't!"

I said to him, "You know, some people have the most beautiful lawns in Dallas in August." He said, "Look, Roger, how long will you have to live here before you learn that if you have a beautiful lawn in Dallas in August you worked...What are you trying to say to me?..."

I said, "I think that I am coming through loud and clear."

●SLIDE #: Leading little ones to God is not a one-time process. It is the issue of eighteen plus years of proper parental modeling. Discuss this next week on transitions.

FOLLOWING IN DAD'S FOOTSTEPS IN GALVESTON, TEXAS ON THE HOT BEACH SAND.

●SLIDE #: 3. GOD'S TRUTH MUST BECOME A HABIT.

READ DEUTERONOMY 6:8-9

Today in our culture, God might mention a more contemporary set of tools.

●SLIDE #: Veggie Tales, Odyssey, Christian Radio, Bible computer games Devotional books.

Moses is saying that the Word of God is so important that it is to control every aspect of life from the most intimate aspect of your bedroom to the most public aspect of community life.

Don't let your kid be in a self study program. Sit with them.

- SLIDE #: WE MUST KNOW AND EXPERIENCE GOD'S PRINCIPLES OF LIFE IN ORDER PROPERLY PASS THEM ON.

My dad did Proverbs 3:1-14 with me.

- SLIDE #: Proverbs 3:1-2: My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity.
- SLIDE #: Proverbs 3:3-4: Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.
- SLIDE #: Proverbs 3:5-6: Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.
- SLIDE #: Proverbs 3:9-10: Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.
- SLIDE #: Proverbs 3:11-12: My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in.
- SLIDE #: Proverbs 3:13: Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding,

If it is not in your heart, it will never be in your home. And if it is not in your home, it will never be in the habit patterns of your children because that is where the habit patterns of your children are developed.

- SLIDE #: Craig Massey's definition of Xn parenting: "Christian parenting is infilling children with the word of God and the life of God so that they will always respond in a predictable manner."

Consistency with BECKY, my dog. Every parent should have to raise and train a dog from puppy to adulthood before they should be allowed to have children.

Teenage years I learned integrity from Albert Fox. R.A. leader, taught us every week about the principles of Xnty, honesty, integrity, etc.

When I was in high school I played catcher on men's fast pitch church softball team.

One game I have never forgotten. I was on first base. One out. Batter hit ground ball, defense began double play. Throw to second base to get me out. Relay throw to first. Saw it all coming, sliding, raised hand into ball's path. Nicked my finger and deflected the ball just off line. Runner was safe. Second baseman started yelling interference. Umpire hadn't even noticed the deflection. I got away with it. Second baseman began arguing runner interference with the base umpire. Trotted to dug out. Then realized I had cheated. It was no accident, intentional deflection.

Returned to umpire and told him what I had done. Asked to see my finger. There was the evidence, still throbbing. Called runner at first out.

Returned to dug out to get glove. Everyone wanted to know what was going on. Quick explanation.

Several incredulous...Albert Fox, "Well, what did you expect him to do? We've been training him this way for years." And we headed out to the field.

God is tailor-made for that kind of scene.

What happens between first and second base is the same thing that happens to a business man at a convention, or a young woman who is surrounded by numerous opportunities to be unfaithful, or by a student who is tempted to take work that isn't his own and cheat his way through school.

And how they respond will be determined by how deeply their habits for Christ have been ingrained.

Parenting is an art. There are four things we must know and experience to do it well.

- SLIDE #: We need to know and experience the right view of God.

We need to know ourselves.

We need to know our child.

- SLIDE #: Proverb 22:6: Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.