

## **7 Parenting Tips from the Word of God**

*Children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward (Psalm 127:3)*

"There are no illegitimate children – only illegitimate parents" (Leon R. Yankwich, judicial opinion, 1928). Not every child is planned by his parents, but every soul is planned by God. Parenting is perhaps the hardest, but most rewarding job there is. There is no greater calling.

Unfortunately, just as in marriage, much of parenting is on-the-job training. Some of us had good examples of parenting modeled before us. Some of us had terrible models. Only God can give us the guidelines needed for raising children that will honor Him.

Raising children is a bit like growing an orchid. One expert said that growing an orchid requires experience, education and to be preventive in respect to problems. In raising children, add a great deal of nurturing, time and love, and you have a start in the process.

Sow a thought, reap an act;  
Sow an act, reap a habit;  
Sow a habit, reap a character (Ralph Waldo Emerson).

A Christian has an advantage in that God's word is a living tool to help cultivate the life that has been entrusted to a parent for a few years.

### **1. The godly parent must tell his children of God's work in his life.**

God chose Abraham so that he would direct his children and their families to keep His way and do what is right and just. Abraham's blessings were not for him alone, but for future generations. God expected him to guide his family, especially his children, in His ways.

God told Moses He performed the miraculous signs in Egypt so Moses would be able to tell the wonderful stories to his children and grandchildren that would prove that He is the Lord.

What children see, they copy. The best compliment or most searing criticism could be, "Your child acts just like you do."

Read and discuss Genesis 18:19 and Exodus 10:2.

### **2. The godly parent must teach his children the Word of God**

The Bible is life's operating manual: a parenting guidebook. Humans are tri-dimensional: physical, mental, spiritual. Some parents make sure their children are nourished physically, send them to school to get education, but leave the spiritual until they can make the decision for themselves. God makes it clear He expects parents to be in charge of their spiritual development.

The Jewish people were very serious about this instruction from the Lord. Christians should be as well. God told His chosen people to devote themselves to His words: teach them to their

children, talk about them at home, on a trip, going to bed at night and rising in the morning, in other words, at all times.

From his childhood, Timothy was taught the scriptures by his mother and grandmother. Paul instructed him to remain true to those things he had been taught. Paul reminded him that God's word teaches us what is true, helps us recognize what is displeasing to Him, and how to straighten out things that are wrong. God's word equips us for all He wants us to do.

Read and discuss Deuteronomy 11:18-19, Proverbs 22:6, 2 Timothy 1:5, 3:14-17.

### **3. The godly parent knows how to lovingly guide his child**

No one likes being constantly criticized, scolded and ridiculed. God tells parents (especially fathers) not to provoke or discourage their children. That can cause them to quit trying. Rather, discipline them with the discipline of the Lord.

You may have had godly parents. You may have had very bad parents. Don't duplicate the bad habits of ungodly parents. You can stop the pattern.

It is the responsibility of the child to learn to be obedient. It is a parent's responsibility to love them enough to do what is necessary to mold their character into God-honoring humans.

Listen to your child. Quality time comes out of quantity time. You cannot set 10 minutes aside and say, "OK, now we are going to have quality time."

A godly parent has the most input into the lives of their children through their actions and their words. If your words do not match your actions, your children will know the difference.

Read and discuss Ephesians 6:1-4, Colossians 3:20-21

### **The godly parent comforts his children**

God, the Holy Spirit, is called the Comforter. He promises to comfort us as a child is comforted by its mother.

Life is tough. Children need someone to lean on, to count on. Children need to learn how to handle difficulties while at home. It prepares them to handle the challenges of the outside world.

Paul told the Thessalonians that he and his friends dealt with them as a father deals with his children: encouraging, comforting and urging them to live lives worthy of God.

Although you should be the primary teacher in your child's life, many others are also training him: teachers, neighbors, people at church. Some reinforce your training. Some do not. It is easy for a child to be confused. Lead by example and your child will see the difference. If you tell your child not to lie, but you lie, he will not trust you nor will you be able to adequately comfort

him when he encounters trials in his life. It is important that you let your child know that you also need God and His comfort – that you are a sinner and you need His guidance.

Accept your child for who he is. His personality may be the opposite of yours. God gave your child his personality, his temperament. Your job is to help him build his character. You will be unable to comfort your child unless he knows you respect him.

A child who knows he is loved and accepted will be able to take the discipline necessary to mold his character. Reinforcing positive behavior will often prevent the need for discipline. If he makes his bed (even if it is not as you would have done), take note of it and don't remake the bed. If he is careful to watch after a sibling, say something about it. Praise goes a long way with a child.

How many of us felt we could not measure up to the standards set by our parents - that we were never good enough at music, art, sports? Are there negative comments that keep popping up in your mind? That is preventable in your relationship with your children. It is not necessary to say anything untrue, but every positive action can prompt a compliment from you. "I really enjoyed hearing you practice the piano," is better than "You played that piece perfectly."

Read and discuss Proverbs 15:1, Isaiah 66:13, Colossians 4:6, 1 Thessalonians 2:11

### **The godly parent provides for his children**

Parents are instructed to provide for their families, especially their children. This is such a strong teaching in God's word that those who refuse to provide for their own are said to have denied the faith and are worse than unbelievers.

Read and discuss Matthew 7:9-10, 2 Corinthians 12:14, 1 Timothy 5:8

### **The godly parent is in charge**

Is being in charge a scary thing for you? If so, are there some things that you need to change before you can become a good example to your child?

Don't leave your child guessing what you believe or what your values are. Joshua took his place in his family seriously and declared that he and his whole family would serve the Lord.

Foundation for a strong family is to put God first. You are in charge of the development of your child for a short time. The best gift you can give them is the knowledge that God is in control.

Your children will never know what your values are if you are not around. A qualification of those in leadership in the church is that he must manage his own family well with children who respect and obey him.

Your child wants you to be in charge. Surveys of children from divorced families revealed that children given an opportunity to choose their parent most often chose the parent who is in charge. That parent made the child feel safe and secure.

Read and discuss Joshua 24:15 and 1 Timothy 3:4-5

### **The godly parent must correct his child**

Discipline has as its root disciple. It is not a negative word (like punishment). Discipline involves firm, reliable and kind guidelines. Your child should know what is expected of him.

Discipline is most effective when begun early. If both parents are involved in raising the child, the discipline should be agreed upon. It is confusing and damaging to a child for one parent to say one thing and the other something else.

If you don't discipline your child, who will? Discipline comes from a Latin word meaning to teach. Paul was able to tell others to follow him as he followed Christ. That is the primary duty of a Christian parent. Model the teaching you have learned from God.

We are born in sin and must learn what is right. Observe a two year old who has never had any instruction. Left to himself, no one wants to be around him.

Remembering that God disciplines each of His children, decide to discipline your own the same way God disciplines you. As a child of God, we still need discipline.

Read and discuss Proverbs 3:11-12, 13:24, 23:13, 29:17, Hebrews 12:7-11

As Christians, we are children of God. God, the Father, is the best model of a parent. What He does for us, we should do for our own children. If you are a true Christian disciple, your children will know it. Your example will prepare them for whatever God has planned for them.

*Each generation can make known Your faithfulness to the next (Isaiah 38:19).*

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