



Faithful Parenting

Principles of Faithful Parenting

1. Goals in Parenting (Vertical & Horizontal)
2. Parents' Godly Example & Prayerful Dependence
3. Consistent Consequences
4. God-Centered Conversations & Relational Influence
5. Structured Environment
6. Gentle Correction

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Vertical and Horizontal Goals in Parenting

Craig Kugler

I. So why do we start with goals?

- A. We start with goals because it helps us understand where we are going and what we are trying to accomplish ... gives us focus and purpose.
- B. It focuses our energies and our efforts. The old adage “If you aim at nothing, you’ll hit it every time.”
- C. It allows us to readjust or recalibrate if we are off track.
- D. In many ways we have some innate goals when it comes to our kids ... we want to monitor to see if they are walking, or talking, learning to read, making friends, etc.
- E. But as we think about our families and our kids... we want to think first about what are trying to accomplish and how do accomplish those things. Today, I’m going to focus more on the what and a little of the hows... many of the follow-on lessons we have will dig into the how. But I think it’s helpful to think about goals in 2 planes... vertical goals (God honoring) and horizontal goals.

II. What are biblical parenting goals for our kids?

- A. Vertical Goals...

Our first and primary goal should be to teach our children God’s word to lead them to salvation so that they can know their Creator, their God, and Savior.

“Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of Christ”. In John 17:3, Jesus says “And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

With this as our primary goal, it begins to shape who we want our children to be before the Lord, how they can grow in Christ likeness, character, making Christ the object of their affection. That we and they would love the Lord God with all their heart, soul, mind, strength

B. Horizontal Goals...

What might be some horizontal goals?

- i. Developing good character and a heart of obedience to us as parents.
- ii. Daily tasks / responsibilities,
- iii. Good students, developing a purpose and direction for what they might accomplish, what they might be good at during their time here on earth, decisions around schooling, future spouse and relationships, importance of fellowship, Development of skills & talents, (sports, music, art, etc.)
- iv. How might God want them to serve in the church

How do we view horizontal goals? Considering who God is (Matt 6:23-34) and God's kingdom plan ... and in light of Gods will (James 4:13-17).

III. Just as there are goals for our children, we need to give consideration about what is our responsibility as parents in accomplishing certain goals.

- A. What do I have control over, what does God hold me accountable to? To teach them the Word of God and to raise them in the training and admonish of the Lord.
- B. Recognizing we are stewards of our children. We are only in authority over them for a time... and we want to move from a place like John the Baptist ... John 3:28 – 30... “He must increase, but I must decrease.”

IV. How do we begin to accomplish these goals?

- A. Developing a plan? Understanding what is needed at different phases of development
- B. Another consideration around goals is that they might fundamentally change, evolve, develop depending upon situations, circumstances. We even see this scripturally 2 Peter 1:5-12... how we are to build on our faith virtue... and if these are yours and increasing... never cease to be fruitful
- C. How do we train? Structured vs. Organic
- D. What am I teaching? (Both in my words and in my actions ... what am I demonstrating to them)
- E. How do I think about discipline? How do I think about instruction?

Point 1: “Goal Foundations”: What are some goal foundations and what is the role we as parent's play?

- 1) **Children** trained to “obey” parents (focus on behavior as a response) and “honor” mother and father (focus on heart as a response).
- 2) **Obey** ... to listen, to harken to a command. Listen attentively, by implication to heed or conform to a command or authority.
 - a. Colossians 3:20
 - b. Proverbs 1:8, 6:20, 23:22
 - c. Deuteronomy 6:1–9

Why do we teach obedience? Because ultimately we want our children to have a heart that obeys the Lord and follows him. Obedience actually requires faith and trust that what is being asked and required is good for me.

Obedience has such a negative connotation in today’s world... we view it as oppressive and authoritative, thus questioning its value. We are skeptical and our natural person pushes back against the idea that following rules are actually good. But in fact that when obedience is aligned to what God has established, it is good and for our good. As parents, this isn’t hard for us to understand when we try to teach a young child the dangers of a hot stove or not running out into the street.

- 3) “Your parents” ...
- 4) In the Lord ...
- 5) For this is right ... this is considered just ... “custom, rule, right” in the fulfillment of duties towards God and man, state of being right or right conduct as judged by the divine standard or human standards.

Point 2: “Motivation for Achieving Goals”: To achieve godly goals that honor the Lord through obedience is not just a behavior issue but a heart issue.

- 1) Honoring your Father and Mother...
 - a. To honor is to assign value to... revere... to prize.
 - i. Mark 7:10, Matt 15:4
 - ii. Proverbs 30:11-14, 17
 - b. Obedience Examples and Models
 - i. Genesis 28:
 - ii. Genesis 37:13
 - iii. Leviticus 19:3
 - iv. Deuteronomy 21:18
 - v. Sam 17:20
 - vi. Esther 2:20

Point 3: “Goal Outcomes”: Goals are all about outcomes ... what is the outcome we are hoping to achieve as we parent our children.

- 1) First commandment with a promise. We want to teach our kids to think about outcomes that are for their good. Those outcomes that bring blessing.
 - a. Proverbs 1:8
 - b. Proverbs 6:20
 - c. Proverbs 23:20-25
 - d. We also want to be conscious and recognize those things that will help / aid in the discipling and training of our children and those things they are harmful. This may include
 - i. Education
 - ii. Relationships
 - iii. Social media and use of technology
 - iv. Culture ... movies, music, games, etc.

Point 4: “The Source of Horizontal Goals”: Developing goals around our faith and character

- 1) That it may go well with you and that you may live long... When we think about what we want for our kids... is there anything more than that for them? We all want the best for our kids... and we search for many ways to accomplish this
 - a. But this raises a greater point... what is our time horizon when we think about our goals for our kids? One of the acronyms commonly used for setting goals is “SMART”. Our goals should be Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant, and Timebound.

Point 5: Recognize goal derailers and goal enablers.

5a. The importance of parental roles in setting horizontal goals.

- 1) Fathers ... comes from the root signifying “protector, nourisher or provider, upholder or discipline” ...

5b: Need to guard against provoking our children which can derail any goals

- 1) Do not Provoke... to abuse to wrath, anger, to make bitter because of unfair treatment, to become disenchanted, or disillusioned.
 - a. Provoking our children is a goal derailer.
 - b. Deut 4:9, 6:7, 11:19... Psalm 78:4

We all come with baggage and sin in our own lives that can negatively affect our parenting, and our kids... we need to learn to recognize it, bring it before the Lord, and repent and ask for forgiveness... and a lot of times that means asking our wives

and kids for forgiveness. I think there is nothing more beautiful and encouraging to our families and kids, and nothing that speaks more to our faith and the power of gospel of Jesus when we are actually living out repentance, forgiveness, and humility in our lives. That turns what can be a goal derailer to a goal enabler.

Point 5c: Rather we want to pursue goal enablers.

- 1) Bring them up..." Raise them". ... rear them up to maturity, nurture / rear. We need to recognize there is a point in they are going to grow up... and will not be with you. We have a short time with them.
 - a. Deuteronomy 6:4 – 9
 - b. Our goal is to bring them up to maturity in Christ.
 - c. Proverbs 19:18, 22:6
- 2) In the discipline ... cultivate of mind and morals, employs for purpose now commands and admonitions, reproof, punishment, chastisement, correction, these are all things that help regulate our character for our good.
- 3) And instruction of the Lord... importance of placing supreme value on the word of God... leads to obedience from the heart shaped by the Word of God. But what are we instructing at the end of the day?
- 4) The importance of God's Word
 - a. We acknowledge that God's work can speak in every aspect of our lives 2 Tim 3:14-16... example of Timothy's Mother, a Jewish believer.
 - b. Deut 32:46-47 ... taking God's word to heart, not empty words but very life... to live long in the land.
 - c. Obedience brings blessing, and obedience bears God honoring fruit. Paul says he has "no greater joy to see my children walking in the truth"

Key questions...

- Should I expect my kids to obey and honor, if they have not put their trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior?
- What if as a father ... I'm good at one aspect but not good at another?

The First 6 Months of Motherhood: Sacrifice and Identity

Rachel Fandre

To know Him and to be made more like Him is the greatest joy and prize one can ever have, making all the loss and hardship along the way worth it.

New babies are exciting. Small, pudgy, and snugly—in so many ways they simplify your life by reducing all the outside stressors and commitments to one, singular task: take care of Baby. But a new baby is anything but simple. While all they do is eat, sleep, and poop, a mom’s life becomes much more complicated. You start asking questions like, “How do I go grocery shopping?” Or, “When can I take a shower?” And alongside these questions of logistics come the other questions like, “When can my husband and I find time to connect?” Or, “Will I ever get to spend time with my friends or do that hobby that I love again?” “When and how do I spend time in the Word?” This singular, new task—take care of Baby—can start to take over and begin to feel like your singular identity. Eat, poop, sleep becomes such a rhythm that you start to feel like a milk-producing robot that is also a pillow and changes diapers! Personal hygiene falls by the wayside, and so quickly, memories of who you were and life before Baby grow dim. While blessed to care for, pour yourself into, and love a new human so deeply, the question lingers: “What’s left of me?”

As a new mom, so many social norms are no longer expected of you. Attendance to most social functions is optional and punctuality is not even a discussion. With sleep and personal hygiene out the window, “whatever clothes fit and are comfortable” becomes the mantra. But while you find yourself on a temporary hiatus of what used to be normal functions of life, there are immovable, Scriptural truths that remain even in the chaos. These truths are your anchor

- What God has done for you (Rom. 5:8),
- His love for you, and
- Who He has made you to be (Eph. 2:10)

The Lord is the God Who Sees (Gen. 16:13)—sees into the chaos, sees your efforts and your hurts, and looks on you with compassion (Luke 9:13). He knows and understands you even when you don’t understand yourself (Ps. 139:1-4), and His love for you is patient and faithful (I Chron. 16:34). While the title and role of “Mom” seems like it will be all-consuming for the remainder of your life, it is not your singular identity, not to Him. He sees all of you—all you have been, all you will be, the sum of all your hopes and desires. Yes, He has called you to motherhood and it is a holy calling, but He did not call you to only ever be “Mom” for the rest of your days. You are still more than “Mom”; you are still all that He has ever made and intended you to be.

But in the trenches of daily life, motherhood does seem to be all-consuming, taking over your time, efforts, and mental energy. It is life-rearranging. After all, motherhood is sacrifice: the beautiful, loving giving up of one’s self for the life and betterment of another.

And leave no doubt, there is much to be given up – sleep, energy, physical wellbeing, comfort, convenience, time, and the list goes on. If this is all just par for the course in motherhood, then shouldn't you simply accept that this is what you signed up for? Grit your teeth, and keep moving forward? What right do you have to feel sorrow over these losses when you've been blessed with so much?

While there is a time and a place to strive for contentment, there is also a time and a place to appropriately mourn what you have lost.

Where there is loss, there is also grief on some level. But grieve in faith that you serve a God who revives and restores (Ps. 119:93). Not all losses will be permanent, despite how endless they may feel in those first few days and weeks. Your body will heal. You'll find a new rhythm and normalcy of life. You'll be able to do normal things again like shower and make dinner. Be patient and trust that these things will be restored in their time. Other things will be restored, but maybe not in the way you thought or hoped. While your body will heal, it may not look or feel the same. That hobby you loved will still be there, but its timing and frequency are now changed.

Through all the rearranging, not only of your schedule and priorities, but also your mindset and thought processes, there are powerful truths about sacrifice that you can cling to. Remember that Jesus, our Savior, knows better than anyone else on earth what it feels like to give beyond what you feel you are able (Luke 22:44). Motherhood may very well be the greatest sacrifice of your life, and therefore, it is the greatest opportunity you will have to understand Jesus' sacrifice at a level you never could before. A deeper knowledge of Christ is the prize that can never be taken away (Phil. 3:8). Knowing Him more is the actual, true singular task of a believer. In Jeremiah 9:24a God says, "But let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows Me" The sacrifice of motherhood strips away everything else so that you are left with the simple, but crucial question, "What truly matters most in this life?" If your answer is "knowing Christ," then you have an identity as one who is forgiven (Ps. 103:12), made new (2 Cor. 5:17), seen by your Creator, and lives each day in the hope of the glorious life with Christ that awaits you (1 Pt. 1:13). This is an identity that cannot be shaken by a little chaos. And it transcends something as temporal as a "phase of life."

In the first few weeks of motherhood, I was overwhelmed. It seemed that everyone and everything around me was demanding more. More milk, more time, more effort, more energy, more planning, more, more, more. I felt as though pieces of me were being removed, eaten away as I was slowly dismantled. But as I cried out to God, He graciously showed me that all those missing pieces would be restored. He Himself would put me back together again. But He wouldn't simply patch me up with leftover rags or a simple Band-Aid. Rather, He would rebuild me with an even greater substance and material than before—the substance of His own Son. He graciously showed me that once He was done rebuilding, I would end up looking more like Jesus; I would end up better off than where I

started. The Christian life is the rhythm of loss and divine restoration, all the while clinging to the promise of Christ. To know Him and to be made more like Him is the greatest joy and prize one can ever have, making all the loss and hardship along the way worth it.

Trust that God sees you in your sacrifice and is working out the process of restoring and reviving you for your good, that is, “to be conformed to the image of His Son” (Rom. 8:28-29). Don’t be afraid or ashamed to mourn your losses, but do so in faith and even in joy because of the great God you serve.

A Parent's Godly Example & Prayerful Dependence

Steve Jackson

A Parent's Godly Example

- I. Key Principle 1 – God made us to be Imitators
 - A. Created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27)

 - B. Invited to Follow Jesus (Matthew 4:9; 10:38; John 10:27)

 - C. Called to Imitate our Godly Leaders (Hebrews 13:7; 2 Thess.3:9; Phil.3:17)

 - D. Our children will naturally imitate us! (1 Timothy 4:16; 1 John 3:18)

- II. Key Principle 2 – Our greatest influence is our Godly Example
 - A. Hypocrisy will provoke our children to anger (Matthew 23:1-3)

 - B. Genuine, life-transforming faith may inspire our children to want to know more (1 Peter 3:15; Matthew 5:16)

 - C. Grace is the key ingredient

- III. Key Principle 3 – Our ongoing Sanctification must always take Priority
 - A. The Biblical Path toward Change (Ephesians 4:20-24)

1. Put off the old self (corrupt through deceitful desires)
2. Be renewed in the spirit of your mind
3. Put on the new self (imitate God)

B. We must remember that no parenting formula or philosophy can replace personal spiritual growth!

Prayerful Dependence

I. Key Principle 1 – You can do NOTHING apart from Christ (John 15:5)

- A. Success does not rest in your strength; it all proceeds from Christ
- B. Christ has ALL the power needed to produce much fruit

II. Key Principle 2 - Abiding in Christ is the key (John 15:4)

A. To abide means to stay connected

1. We must learn to practice the presence of God (Matt.28:20; Ps.139:7)
2. We must be filled by the Holy Spirit (Eph.5:18-21)
3. We must welcome God's Word to dwell richly in us (Col.3:16)

B. Christ can't be compartmentalized to only a few places in our lives (Col.3:17)

III. Key Principle 3 - Prayer changes everything (James 5:16)

A. We need to be praying for our kids

1. The things we really want to see happen are the things that only God can do
2. Resist the temptation to try to be the Holy Spirit; instead, beg God to do His work in them

B. We need to be praying with our kids

1. As you listen to your kids pray, you get a glimpse into their hearts
2. As your kids listen to your prayers, they get a glimpse of your dependence upon God
3. Teach your kids to turn to prayer in their times of need

C. We need to be praying for ourselves

Unexpected Realities in Adoption

Jennifer Ebenhack

Theological Truths for the Unexpected Realities of Adoption

- You have answered a call of God—a sacrificial calling (Romans 12:1). It will be hard, you are learning to “run with the horses” (Jeremiah 12:5). You said “yes” to God, so as you experience the highs and lows, as you feel alone on the hard parts of the journey, reaffirm your “yes” and quickly give your burdens and temptations toward negative attitudes to the Lord. Remember that with His calling comes His enablement and His blessing (Isaiah 58:11).
- Your identity is in Christ alone. You are not defined by your children, how they came to you, or what their challenges are. Your identity is not based on what others think of your adoption journey or your child, nor on what your child thinks of you. Remain anchored in Christ and His love. Find yourself in Him alone.
- Your child must find his or her identity in Christ as well. All children, but especially adopted children wrestle with their identity, whether early or later in life. Don’t let this intimidate you; rather, lean into this issue and make it a matter of prayer and discussion with your child over the years. They will only ever be truly found in Him.
- As much as you love your child, you cannot control them. You can provide love, nurture, instruction in the Lord, and every opportunity to help them succeed, but you cannot control their choices or their future just like you could not control their past. It is your job to walk in obedience to the Lord and be a faithful parent while they are entrusted to you. Rest in the foundational truth that God alone is in control.

Practical Points for Unexpected Realities in Adoption

- Adverse Childhood Experiences, known as “ACEs” have happened to your adopted child. These experiences—prenatal drugs or alcohol, abandonment, and traumas of various kinds—will come into play throughout your child’s life and possibly manifest themselves through challenging behaviors and mindsets, health issues, or special needs. Whether your child was adopted at birth or later in life, and despite how deeply you love your child, ACEs are a reality. These are not your child’s fault. Learn all you can in order to best meet the needs of your child in the face of these struggles they did not choose.
- There are resources designed for what you are experiencing. Make sure to take advantage of the godly, practical wisdom and encouragement of books, podcasts,

websites, and conferences for adoptive parents. (For starters, check out the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development and Trust-Based Relational Intervention–TBRI.)

- Though you may feel alone at times, know there are many others who have walked paths similar to or even more challenging than yours. Seek fellowship with other adoptive parents. Pride and isolation are unnecessary when many others who understand are willing to be vulnerable, listen to you, and encourage you.
- Maintaining a relationship with your child’s birth family can simultaneously be a blessing and can also be very challenging. You may need to seek help to discern how to show Christ’s love while protecting your child’s heart.
- Even if your child does not have an ongoing relationship with birth relatives, they will need to talk openly about their birth parents and family. This is an opportunity to lovingly guide your child through pain and loss, while also anchoring them in Christ.

Kindness

(Luke 6:31, Matthew 7:12)

&

Gratefulness

(1 Thessalonians 5:18)

In simple terms, treat others as you'd like to be treated and there is always something to be thankful for.

- We are all sinners, because of this we are selfish. We have to learn how to be “others centered” (Phil. 2:3-4)
- Be their example (1 Cor. 11:1)—they are always watching and listening.

Kindness

- Talk to your kids about other’s feelings. This will start your kids thinking about how another child or person may view a situation. This can be both when a situation is joyful or a hard situation.
- Take opportunities to do fun kind acts for others where you may not see the reward. These can be simple cards to family members or paying for the coffee of the person behind you in line. This makes *the act of kindness the reward* and not always the acknowledgment the reward.
- If they have a friend that has something exciting coming up or they are going through a hard time talk to your child about it. Ask them if they were in that situation what would they hope someone would do for them.

Gratefulness

- From the time your child is young always use “Please” and “Thank You” to them and around them. This will start as a foundation and as your child grows up you can explain why you say those words. The conversation can get more in depth as your child matures.
- Each night when we’d put the kids down for bed, we would all talk about things that we were grateful for. When your kids are young, they may be thankful for things that seem silly, but do not discourage them. They are learning to find how to be thankful each day. As they grow so too will their gratefulness.

As sinners ourselves, we will fail at being kind or grateful at times. That is okay. Talk to your kids about how you weren’t kind in a situation or how things have been really rough lately and you are struggling to find something to be grateful for. Let them see you confess that you are a sinner and to ask God to forgive you and know that you are forgiven.

In the end,

Pray over your children. Direct them towards knowing God personally. Kindness and gratefulness help, but ultimately, they need to have a heart that seeks God.

The Following Resources are from Lowcountry Biblical Counseling Center in Charleston, SC. Please visit lbcc.org for more.

The Prayers of the Apostle Paul

Combining prayerful dependence with ministering and modeling the Word of God is indispensable in causing spiritual regeneration and transformation to impact the hearts of those we seek to reach and disciple. The Apostle Paul was incredibly gifted in speaking and writing sound theology, but he did not rely on those alone to produce spiritual fruit in the lives of his listeners and observers. But it was constant, fervent prayerful dependence that caused the seeds of those things to grow into what we now know as the church.

So use the following prayers of Paul as the basis of your prayers for your children. Do this daily for 30 days. Be frequent, fervent, and specific as you pray these things into the life of your children. Each request below shines a different light on what the Lord alone must do if a saving, sanctifying change of heart is to occur. Ask Him!

I. Ephesians 1:17-19a

I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you spiritual wisdom and revelation in your growing knowledge of him--since the eyes of your heart have been enlightened--so that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the incomparable greatness of his power toward us who believe ...

II. Ephesians 3:16-19

I pray that according to the wealth of his glory [the Father] may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner person, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, so that, because you have been rooted and grounded in love, you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and thus to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

III. Philippians 1:9-11

And I pray this, that your love may abound even more and more in knowledge and every kind of insight so that you can decide what is best, and thus be sincere and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

IV. Colossians 1:9b-12

[I ask] God to fill you with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may live worthily of the Lord and please him in all respects--bearing fruit in every good deed, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might for the display of all patience and steadfastness, joyfully giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the saints inheritance in the light.

*****WRITE A SPECIFIC PRAYER FOR EACH OF YOUR CHILDREN *****

Start with your oldest and work down. Base it on their current 1. **GOD-GIVEN STRENGTHS** (that you can see in them); 2. **NEEDS & TEMPTATIONS** (that you are aware of); 3. **TRIALS IN LIFE** (that you know they are going through); 4. **VERTICAL GOALS** (that you have for them as you look into the future) Is there a verse that comes to mind that you can include, if not that is okay maybe later. Give this to your child (if seems appropriate) and pray it over them later today or next week, commit to praying for them regularly for the next 30 days until prayerful dependence becomes a habit.

Dear Father, I pray for my precious child, _____,

E. **PROVOCATIVE TRAIT INVENTORY:** What ways do I tend to provoke my child? **Check the traits below that you may need to regularly "weed out" of your life.**

1. _____ - Prov 29:15

uninvolved passive distracted inconsistent or under discipline letting child get away with sinful non-verbal communication or whining ignorant of child's needs and struggles unstructured and undisciplined lifestyle lazy forgetful preoccupied non-confrontational prayerless devotional-less with family and with own _____

2. _____ **AND ABUSIVE REACTIONS** - Eph 4:31-32

strikes when had enough violent angry bitter resentful harsh hateful malicious impatient unkind over-reacting _____

3. _____ **RELATIONSHIP** – Col 3:21

unpleasant to be with unbiblically strict over-discipline unrealistic expectations and standards pushing achievement rushed and impatient unenjoyable always serious minded child is used as escape and burden bearer depressed worrier possessive controlling militant unyielding and unapproachable forced compliance vs. shepherded obedience do not seek to persuade the heart of the child pharisaical parenting (motivated by a concern of how your child makes you look) parenting from a throne not a cross; the master of the house vs. the servant of God. _____

4. **UNBIBLICAL** _____ – Eph 4:15; 4:16-17; 4:29-30

failure to communicate clearly lying deception clamming up blowing up verbal attacks gossip venting slander complaining sarcasm flattery not-addressing problems scolding unwholesome talk not edifying never or rarely encouraging or complimenting discouraging speech heavy speech judging poor listener rushing to judgment before collecting all the information failure to try and understand child failure to admit wrong and confess sin _____

5. **WORLDLY AND SELFISH** _____ – Mk 4:18-19; 1 Tim 6:10; Eph 5:3-6; 1 Jn 2:15;

ungodly amusements and pastimes (i.e. worldly movies, t.v. shows, music, reading materials, computer use, etc.) obsessed with hobbies (etc. golf, sports, shopping,) over-working driven acquisition of bigger and better things unsacrificial financially irresponsible (i.e. spending more than you can or should) showering child with gifts and more than they need letting extra-curricular activities (i.e. sports, clubs, etc.) dominate the schedule _____

6. _____ **LIVING** - Matt 10:37 - *It must be about God, not your child.*

spoiling child favoritism treating child like the king of the house (i.e. you are their chauffer, secretary, chef, and maid) over-providing for child overprotective, fear-based parenting; afraid for him or her” obsessed climate controller for child thinks much about “emotional” well-being of child servant of child not of God allowing manipulation (i.e. arguing, whining, playing on parents emotions) treats and talks to child like a baby not establishing or enforcing consequences out of fear you may lose them. _____

How to Remove the Heart Behind Your Provocative Traits

1. _____ and Identify the Specific Provocative Traits (Ps 139:23-24)

Prayerfully examine your relationship with your children in light of the six common provocative traits. Check the boxes that are characteristic of your relationship with your child. If you are really serious about it, let your spouse or best friend evaluate your relationship with your child on these things. Even humble yourself before your children whom you have provoked; seek forgiveness and seek change, and let them check over the list.

2. Research Where You Need Renewal of the Mind Most (Rom 12:2)

Ask prayerfully and search the Scriptures, "What am I _____ or untaught about God that if I clearly saw it and believed it, would not so easily rationalize my sin against my child? Would I be more spiritually motivated to change?" (i.e. Eph 2:5-6; Matt 18:5-10; Matt 25:40; 1 Pet 2:21-25; James 3:9-10; see also "Provocative Parenting Is Dangerous & Dumb")

3. Renew the Mind Before & During Temptation to Provoke

Write down how these chosen passages relate to your challenge or motivate you to change your traits (for help, have a godly person explain them to you); then, each day rehearse these verses by writing them out on a piece of paper expecting the result of 2 Timothy 2:7. It is the Word that the Spirit will use to convict and correct your sinful heart & habits until it is second nature to respond obediently (2 Tim 3:16-17). Rehearse these convicting and correcting truths at the moment you are tempted to be provoked by your children and thus to provoke your children. This _____ of the mind will clear the way to biblical change!

4. Seek Biblical Forgiveness Each Time You Fail (Matt 5:23-24)

There is only one thing more detrimental to raising godly children than parental sin, and that is parental pride in not seeking _____ and change when they do sin (Matt 5:23-24; Prov 28:13; James 4:6) Use "Four Memo's When Seeking Forgiveness" to help.

If you are going to raise children in the Lord, there is nothing more foundational than this matter of removing provocative traits and replacing them with a godly example. This is why the first instruction in Eph 6:4 is "provoke not". We must "put off" if we are to effectively "put on" Christ. We can only bring up children in the discipline and the instruction of the Lord if we, ourselves, are progressively being "brought up" in the Lord. – 1 Tim 4:7,8

Consistent Consequences

Steve Jackson

I. Key Principle 1 – We must follow our Heavenly Father’s example of discipline (Hebrews 12:5-11)

A. Who? Answer: Our sons (and daughters)

B. What? Answer: Administering painful and unpleasant consequences now in order to yield good fruit later

C. When? Answer: When our children exit God’s circle of blessing

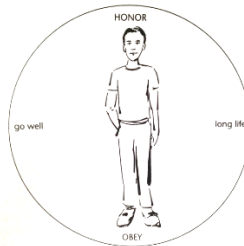


Figure 7 Circle of Safety

from Shepherding a Child's Heart by Ted Tripp

D. Why? Answer: That it may yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness

E. Where? Answer: Discipline in private

F. How?

1. God communicates His goals and rules for us as His children
2. God helps us consider how His rules out to be applied in our life
3. God gives both consequences and rewards

4. God expects His rules to be obeyed, but also gives grace in abundance

5. God's discipline is always governed by His love

II. Key Principle 2 - Consistency is Key

A. Consistency means that you enforce the rules you give

B. Consistency means that you do not either enforce rules you have not communicated or give varying consequences for the same actions

C. Consistency is most challenging at the start but grows easier with time

III. Key Principle 3 – There is no one-size-fits-all approach to discipline

A. Natural Consequences

B. Constructive Consequences

C. Corporal Consequences

Letting Consequences Be Felt by Your Teenager

Brenda Metro

When our children are young, it is simpler to understand and implement some of the tools that God has laid out in the Bible for discipline. Proverbs 13:24 tells us “He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines diligently.” Hebrews 12:6-8 encourages us that “the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives. It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline...then you are illegitimate children and not sons.” Our discipline or consequences change as our children grow. One way that God shepherds us, and we can likewise shepherd our teens, is through consequences. It takes careful consideration and consistency to “discipline diligently” as we focus on the goal of turning their heart toward God.

First, seek to understand the source of a teen’s wrong behavior. “We must pastor the hearts of our children with the kind of faithful, watchful care for their souls that we receive from our heavenly Father” (Paul David Tripp). Sometimes the source of the behavior is foolishness or lack of self-control and more training and practice is needed. Other times the behavior is clearly disobedience to God's law. Either way, it is always a chance to point our teen to the Word which is accurate in judging hearts. A parent can ask thoughtful questions to better understand their teens' motives and actions. “What were you thinking when you did this?” “What was your desire, what was your goal?” “If you could do it again, what would you do differently?”

Consider a consequence that is closely related to the problem. We want to uphold God's rules and show mercy and careful consideration as we give consequences. Consequences should help our teen grow in God-honoring character traits like self-control, obedience and considering others above themselves. The childhood concept of “If we break it, we fix it. If we mess it up, we clean it up” still rings true. For example, if your child breaks their phone by carelessly throwing it on the counter, a related consequence may be that they have to earn the money to fix it. They will have to go without a phone for a time. If your teen has friends over and makes an epic mess in the kitchen feeding them, but fails to clean up afterwards, a related consequence may be that they are solely responsible for kitchen clean-up for an extended time.

When you consider the consequence, take into account the severity of the sin. For example, if your child was found stealing from their employer the consequence may be that they lose their job. This is a chance to point them to how they have broken God’s law. It could be a time for them to feel the consequences from their employer and at home. A related consequence may be that if they steal from their job and are showing they are not trustworthy, then they cannot pay for gas and thus cannot drive the car.

As your child fulfills these consequences, use it as a chance for training. Every sinful situation can be a redemptive opportunity. There may be times to come alongside them and instruct them or work shoulder-to-shoulder with them showing compassion as a fellow sinner. “Therefore as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love which binds them all together in perfect unity” (Col. 3:12-14).

We know that both blessings and consequences ultimately come from God. Our goal in disciplining with consequences is modeled after God's goal of heart change. In Ezekiel 14:5, it is said that God is working to “recapture the hearts of my people of Israel, who have deserted me for their idols.” We get to join in that work each time we prayerfully discipline diligently and seek the Spirit to do the work of heart change.

Support for Children with Special Needs

Laurie Adachi

Psalm 139:13-14 says, “For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.” Whatever strengths and weaknesses your child has, God made them perfectly with intent to be uniquely them. We as parents guide and help children to become what God intends them to be, not to force them to be what we want them to be.

The “special” in special needs indicates a child with needs that differ from a typical child who is developing at a rate that is typical for their age. This difference may be in processing information (learning disability), a limited attention span, impulsive or overactive behavior, poor emotional regulation, a physical impairment, developmental delay, autism, or exposure to a traumatic event ... this list is not exhaustive.

When considering how to parent a child with special needs there is not a one size fits all recipe. Each diagnostic category differs from another. Within a diagnostic category, children are not all the same. Even learning disabilities manifest differently, depending on where the weaknesses are. Here are a few important things to take into account when determining how to adjust you parenting to meet the needs of you special needs child:

- Their temperament; are they cooperative, strong-willed, dependent, independent, sensitive, or easily overwhelmed.
- What is their developmental age?
- What is their level of self-control?
- Expressive and receptive language; do they understand your direction, can they follow a direction, how many directions can they follow?
- Do they remember what is said to them?

All of these factors require adjustments to how you parent a child with special needs.

Here are some things to consider when parenting a child with special needs:

1. Beyond your child’s chronological age, what is your child’s developmental level? Let this guide your expectations.
2. What are your child’s deficit areas? You can’t expect your child to do something they’re not capable of. Make sure you understand your child’s unique abilities, weaknesses, and struggles.

3. When guiding your child's behavior, begin with a reasonable goal in mind. Train the child with "baby steps," making closer and closer approximations to the goal. Be patient, aren't we all a work in progress?
4. Begin to train skills for independence early. These are the life skills that are needed to help your child reach their potential. Begin with basic self-help skills and simple ways to help with household responsibilities, et cetera. Keep your hopes for your child high but maintain reasonable expectations on a day-to-day basis.

Colossians 3:20 tells us, "Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged." This comes to mind when I think of parenting a child with special needs. Make sure your expectations for your child are realistic to their ability. Meet them where they are at. As you would with a younger child, *train* them to follow directions, love others and obey. If you are holding your child to too high a standard, they may withdraw, refuse to try, act out or melt down. Children with special needs can often have difficulty communicating intent so behavior ensues.

In conclusion, Ephesians 6:4 also says, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." Seek to understand what is being communicated by your child's behavior so that you can help them make changes. Remember to celebrate the wins and don't get discouraged. It's key to lean on the Lord and fellowship with other parents who are walking a similar path.

Relational Influence & Gospel-Centered Conversations

Greg E. Gifford

I. How do we effectively influence others in relationships?

- A. Showing up only when correction is needed?
- B. Bossing others around and expecting them to say, “Yes sir!”
- C. Only spending time with people when doing something we enjoy?
- D. Relational Influence

Two Options: Option #1

I don’t normally talk with my child until they need instruction or discipline, then I provide it (“lifeguard model”).

Option #2

I provide instruction with them in the “foxhole,” but instruction is simply part of our time together—not the only occasion for it.

II. How did Jesus relate to the disciples?

- A. Ate with them (Mark 14:17)
- B. Traveled with them (John 4:1-8)
- C. Slept where they slept (John 18:2)
- D. Goes to where they are (John 21:4).
- E. Jesus doesn’t invite them to stand in his courtyard while he sits on a throne, at a great distance. He is with his sheep. Jesus’ ministry helps provide a cue for parents.

III. In general, you have relational influence with those that you relate with in more than corrective ways.

- A. We know this at work: team building exercises.

- B. We know this in marriage: date nights.
- C. The same is true for our children! To have a platform on which to speak to them, you need to live life in proximity with them.

IV. Warning!

- A. The most strained parental relationships will be with those who espouse the lifeguard model.
- B. We strain relationships with our children by not having any relationship with them outside of our disciplinary relationship.
- C. In this way, we encourage disobedience by our children.
- D. We are not seeking to be our children’s best friend, we simply understand how influence works.

V. Ideas for Cultivating Relational Influence with your Kids

- A. Tedd Tripp’s Authority vs. Influence, *Shepherding a Child’s Heart*

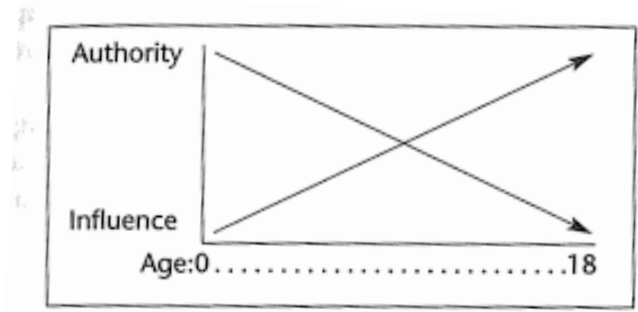


Figure 6 Authority/Influence Continuum

- B. Cultivate interests in what they do—more than being present while they do something (i.e., you’re sitting at the park or in the crowd at a recital).
- C. Die to yourself to be with them doing what they’re doing.

- D. Identify mutually enjoyable activities that you can all participate in.
- E. Do your best to be present and participating in activities with them.

Gospel-Centered Conversations

I. Review of the Vertical and Horizontal Goal of Parenting:

- A. We have a goal in mind for the direction of conversation with our kids.
- B. We are looking for opportunities to share with them about what really matters.
- C. When will these *best happen* as we are already in relationship with our kids.

II. Biblical Motivation for Gospel Centered Conversations

- A. 1 Corinthians 15:1-3
- B. “First Importance”: Does your conversation with your children demonstrate that you value the gospel first?
- C. Acts 4:12: “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”
- D. John 14:6: “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”
- E. Romans 11:36: “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.”
 - i. Each of these verses show us that the Gospel and the work of Christ is primary to our lives and that the goal of our lives are to exalt Christ!
 - ii. If you really do believe this, then your conversations will naturally gravitate toward the Gospel.

III. Methods for God-Centered Conversations (Deut. 6:6-9)

- Informal {
 - A. “When you sit”:
 - B. “When you walk”:
 - C. “When you lie down”:
- Formal {
 - D. “We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation” (Ps. 78:4; Eph. 6:4).

IV. Practical Steps

A. Informal:

- i. When Your Child Fails: How can you point them back to depending on Christ and boasting in their weaknesses (2 Cor. 12:7)?
- ii. When Your Child Is Hurt (Physically and Emotionally): How can you point them to be strengthened by Christ (Ps. 18:1-3)?¹
- iii. When Your Child is Betrayed: How can you help them resonate with Christ's betrayal and respond like him (1 Pet. 4:19)?
- iv. A few questions to equip yourself with:
 1. What do you think God would want you to do?
 2. What does the Bible say you should do?

B. Formal:

- i. Family Worship Time – “a God-centered time not behavior correcting time – it’s a time to know God more clearly and respond through Old Testament History, Proverbs and Psalms, Gospel of Jesus Christ (spend much time in these three).”²

V. Conclusion—You’re a Farmer (1 Cor. 3:7)!

¹ This is obviously not encouraging emotional hurtful or physically hurtful relationships.

² Tim Bryant, Parenting by Faith, Lowcountry Biblical Counseling Center, 46-47.

Dating Help for Teenagers

Naomi Graham

As parents, we share the common goal of raising children who honor God in all aspects of their lives, including relationships. While the world around us may glamorize fleeting connections, our role is to equip our teens with the wisdom and values found in Scripture. Here are some key lessons I've learned along the way:

Things to Think About As A Teen BEFORE Dating Begins:

- **Shared Interests and Values:** Compatibility in friendships often translates to compatibility in romantic relationships. Be discerning in who you choose to start a relationship with. Can you see this person as your future spouse?
- **Love as a Verb:** Love is not merely a feeling but an action. It involves selfless service, sacrifice, and putting the needs of others before one's own. Can you differentiate between “liking” someone and biblically “loving” someone? (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)
- **Group Activities:** Engaging in group settings allows for casual interaction and reduces pressure.

Things to Think About as a Parent BEFORE Your Teen Starts Dating:

- **Open Communication:** Create a safe space for open and honest conversations about relationships, emotions, and expectations. Encourage your teen to share their thoughts and feelings without fear of judgment.
- **Age-Appropriate Expectations:** Understand the developmental stages of adolescence and set realistic expectations (boundaries) for dating. Focus on friendship and group activities initially.
- **Building Character:** Prioritize character development over romantic relationships. Foster qualities such as kindness, compassion, integrity, and respect (Ephesians 4:32).
- **Leading by Example:** Demonstrate healthy relationships in your own marriage. Your actions speak louder than words, modeling what love, respect, and commitment look like (Ephesians 5:22-32).
- **Shared Values:** A strong relationship is built on shared beliefs and values. Help your teen understand the importance of finding someone who shares their faith and commitment to living a God-honoring life. Remind them that creating “unequally yoked relationships” is not advisable (2 Corinthians 6:14).

- **Social Media and Technology:** Discuss the impact of social media on relationships. Set guidelines for online behavior, texting, and digital boundaries.
- **God's Design for Purity:** The Bible offers clear guidelines for sexual purity. Help your teen understand the importance of waiting until marriage to experience physical intimacy (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8).

Things To Consider As Dating Commences for the Parent & Teen:

- Encourage your child to develop deep **connections with friends** who are positive influences. These relationships can provide a strong support system during the dating process.
- **Praying Together:** The power of prayer is undeniable. Pray regularly for your teen's heart and for God's guidance in their relationships.
- **Stay engaged** with your teen through this process. Use active listening. Understand and respond to your teen in an engaging way that builds trust (James 1:19).
- Don't overlook the positive impact **that youth group leaders/small group leaders** can have on your child's life. It doesn't lessen your role as a parent, but should support your role. Consider youth group leaders as a valuable support system that will help hold them accountable as they go through the dating process.

Practical Advice to Help Safeguard Your Teen During This Time:

- **Monitor Digital Activity:** Understand the platforms your teen uses and set appropriate limits. Consider parental control apps to monitor online activity.
- **Open Phone Policy:** Consider a policy of no locked phones. This could include you reading their text messages and monitoring their social media posts for possible red flags.
- **Know Their Friends:** Encourage your teen to spend time with friends you trust and admire. Be aware of the company they keep.
- **Curfew and Location Sharing:** Establish reasonable curfews and consider using location-sharing apps to stay informed of your teen's whereabouts.
- **Teach Critical Thinking:** Equip your teen with the skills to evaluate information and resist peer pressure.
- **Master the Art of Conversation:** Deepen connections through phone calls and face-to-face interactions. While texting is convenient, real conversations build stronger bonds. Encourage open, honest communication and the confidence to connect on a deeper level.
- **Parental Involvement:** Stay involved in your teen's life and be aware of their friendships and relationships. A watchful eye can help prevent potential pitfalls.

- **Seek Guidance from Church Leadership:** If you're concerned about your teen's behavior or relationships, consider reaching out to your church's youth pastor or counseling pastor for support and guidance.

Remember, we are raising a generation of young people who will impact the world for Christ. By grounding our approach in Scripture and offering unwavering support, we can equip our teens to build strong, God-honoring relationships. Let's continue to pray for and support each other as we navigate this journey together.

Thinking About Diagnoses With the Bible

Elise Wilkinson

As a parent it can be very scary when faced with circumstances that point to mental health issues. As most of us do, when there is a problem with our bodies we go to the doctor. I encourage you to start here. Many issues that affect our brains can be brought to light by simple blood work. Vitamin deficiencies can cause an array of problems. Ask for an entire blood work up. Share dietary habits good or bad. Talk about sleep issues. Be thorough. Or even better go to a holistic doctor, they are thorough. I have heard people ask, who should I see, a doctor, dietician, personal trainer, nutritionist, therapist? My opinion is yes. See them all if you must but start with your doctor and most importantly pray about it. Because while running full speed ahead for answers might feel like the best approach as a parent, as believers were called to walk by faith.

There's a lot of questions that surround this topic. Some being what are the warning signs my child needs help? Who should I turn to if my child is not a believer or if my child is a believer? How can I fix this situation with as little long-term damage as possible? I am sure you have a lot more. But today I'd like to offer you some information that I believe will help you immediately, should this be your current situation.

First, I'm going to explain how someone is diagnosed. I will explain the medical fields explanation and source of diagnoses. Next, I will give you examples of diagnoses in the Bible. Last, I will talk about the importance of identity and what to do in light of your identity.

Getting a Medical/Mental Health Diagnosis:

Currently clinicians use what is called the DSM 5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition) to diagnose and treat mental disorders. There are over 300 disorders in this manual. The first edition was written in 1952. Every 10-15 years this book is revised. Mental disorders are removed, changed or added.

Examples of a few currently listed are Hypervigilance or Overly Alert disorder. This is defined as an elevated state of constantly assessing potential threats. Possibly brought on by PTSD or surviving abuse. Another example is Level 2 Autism. These individuals require more support and have problems that are more obvious to others. One more example in today's DSM 5 is Mental Retardation or Intellectual disability or development disorder. I don't think I need to explain that one.

There are two reasons something gets removed from the DSM 5. First the complexity of the interface between psychiatry and medicine have become apparent. Example: Rett syndrome was removed in 2010. Second reason a disorder is removed, is to rename or remove the stigma associated with the disorder. Example Gender identity disorder was renamed Gender dysphoria in 2013. This book is the authority on our mental health. If we let it be.

Next were going to look at where this all existed before the labels were made and identities changed. The bible. The real book of authority. Roots of contemporary psychiatry

can be traced back to bible times. Most of you probably know these already but let's highlight a few here just to refresh and refocus our minds.

King Saul: Showed evidence of manic episodes with psychotic phases, major depression with psychotic features, mixed episodes, and bi-polar one disorder.

King David: showed signs of major depression episodes, shame, guilt and dysthymic disorder. (Psalm 13, & 69)

Hannah: suffered from severe sorrow and grief, no self-worth due to infertility (Samuel 1:2-2:21)

Elijah: Was an incredible man of God yet at the top of his game he felt hopeless and lived in fear. (1Kings 19:4)

Job: I can only imagine his deep sorrow and confusion. He was blameless yet the people closest to him suggested he deserved the hell he was walking through. He felt completely alone and abandoned. (Job 7:16, 30:20)

Jonah: wanted his life to end (Jonah 4:3)

Jesus: felt such severe anxiety he sweat blood (Luke 22:44) He was overwhelmed with sorrow. Matthew 26:38

Basically, there is nothing new under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 1:10) So in light of this truth what do we do with the mental health crisis unfolding in our very own homes. Our world has changed psychiatric labels or diagnosis, into identities. Ask your teen who they are? What is their identity? If their answer is not the son or daughter of the one true King, ask them if they'd like it to be.

Regardless of that answer the next step, love on them. Because in light of our identity, that's what the Bible tells us to do. Not one of us is going to stand before God as believers and have to answer for why we loved so big. We cannot go wrong with loving next level! This might be you celebrate the little victories, like making it to school 5 days in a row. Or being your kids biggest cheer leader. (Maybe do this one when only he or she can witness it so as not to cause even more embarrassment) Or maybe it's simply being continually present, phones off, tv off, mind engaged when your child is home. Because let me tell you they are smart. They know when you are thinking about ten other things while they are venting about their situation.

Lastly let me impart three pieces of advice. Feel free to stop reading here if you don't want it. I won't ever know!

1. A Christians use of prescription drugs for mental health issues is ultimately between that believer and the Lord. The bible neither commands or forbids medical treatments, and the Lord can work to heal the mind and body in many ways. Through counseling, surgery, environmental changes and yes medicines.
2. Your job as a parent is to honor God with your words, actions, and attitude. Do those three things and you are winning at life in the eyes of God.
3. When you fail as a parent ask God to forgive you because he wants to! He loves you and never meant for us to carry these heavy burdens. We cannot save our kids, fix our kids, or change them. WE can LOVE them. (1 Corinthians 13:7)

Action Plan:

Fear Not- Isaiah 43:2

Lean Hard -John15:5, 15:11, Psalm 103:1-5

Trust Completely- Jeremiah 32:17

1. What would change if you choose to lean more on God's wisdom and strength as you walk through the challenges?

PRAY: Dear God, I need to lean on your faithfulness instead of my own understanding. I choose to lean into your grace and receive the strength Christ gives. Help me to have peace in who you are and what you are capable of regardless of our circumstances.

2. What can we learn from Jesus's final hours? Despite knowing he would have victory over death he still experienced severe anxiety. Knowing the outcome did not change the desire to remove the pain that was paralyzing him.

PRAY: Dear God thank you for releasing me from the weights of this world. From the identities this world is putting on me and my children. I release what I have tried to control. I release the illusion of control. I release my own expectations. And ask that I may grow in

this discomfort and want your will more than _____. Help me to desire my child's testimony more than their healing.

3. It's never bad timing to forgive and be forgiven.

Forgive yourself. Forgive your child. Forgive your spouse. Forgive you 2nd grade teacher. If you're holding onto hurt, now is the time to let it go and accept God's forgiveness. Because you can't truly feel His love and forgiveness when your harboring bitterness.

PRAY: Dear God, I am ready to dream big and walk in light of the fact that nothing is too big for you. My child is safe in your loving arms. I can trust you. I can focus on you. I can walk in gratitude regardless of the circumstances. Because I may be surrounded by chaos but the chaos is not in me.

Structured Environment

Greg E. Gifford

I. The Results of Total Chaos in the Home

A. The family that has no significant structure is a family that is setting the kids up for failure.

i. Behavioral problems

ii. Professional skills (i.e., late for class = late for work)

iii. Cultivates Flakiness

B. Kids Under 10 Need Structure More Than Counseling

i. If your home is chaotic, no counselor will bring true help to your child.

ii. Don't just focus on behavioral changes, focus on structuring your home.

1. Bed Time / Quiet Time / Meal Time

II. Biblical Reasons for Structure

A. God is a God of order (1 Cor. 14:33)

i. Not extreme rigidity

ii. Teleological argument for God (Watch and the Watchmaker)

- B. Stewardship of time (Eph. 5:15-16)
- C. Faithfulness: Letting your “yes” be “yes” (Matt. 5:37)

- D. Discipline yourself for godliness (1 Tim. 4:7)

- E. Don’t live an emotions-led life (Gen. 4:6-8)

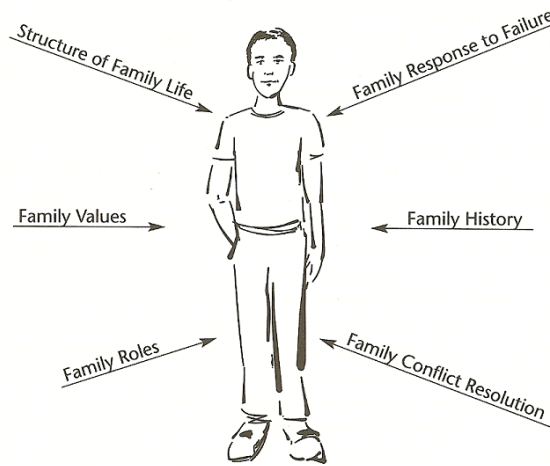


Figure 2 Shaping Influences

From Tedd Tripp’s, *Shepherding a Child’s Heart*

- F. Family Structure is a Shaping Influence on your Child!

III. Practical Reasons for Structure

- A. Help your child learn discipline, time management, and clear expectations of the home.

- B. Help your family plan and know where to be.

- C. Cultivate time together

- D. Teach your kids to live by truth, not their feelings.
- E. Live in a considerate way of others
- F. Create an environment where your kids can be set up to follow Christ well.

IV. It “Takes Two” to Structure

- A. Any fracturing in our communication as parents will demonstrate itself in structure of our homes. Marital unity will cultivate unity in parenting (cf. Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5-6).
- B. First, get on the same page as a couple then you can approach the structure of your home and expectations.
 - i. If you are a single-parent, seek to establish preferences with your child’s other parent so they have continuity at both houses.

V. Types of Structure to Implement

There is freedom in Christ to be different, as each of us come from different backgrounds and culture, but these elements should be present to some degree.

- A. Biblical Roles of Mom and Dad (Or Just One if Only One is Present!)
- B. Schedule
 - i. Calendar When Events Are and Plan for Them (Google Cal.)
 - ii. Bed Time / Nap Time

- iii. Eating / Meal Times

C. Consistent Consequences

- i. If you are not developing consequences as a parent, you will allow things to escalate to a point of being more and more chaotic. This is *your* fault, not your child's.

D. Noise Level

- i. Yelling/Screaming

- ii. Music

- iii. TV

E. Stable Home Life and Location

- i. Clean and healthy home environment

- ii. Pursuing job security so kids aren't bounced around

- iii. Being thoughtful about moving and the toll that has on our children

- 1. *For example:* Don't move your child's senior year, if at all possible.

VI. Conclusion

We cannot control the decisions our children make in the environment we help create, but we can create environments that make it easier for them to follow Christ knowing that God must do the work of heart transformation (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18).

Scheduling with Multiple Kids

Jaymee Himsey

We live in a culture and a time in history where we could fill every waking moment of every day with activities and sports, academic endeavors, or technological distraction—you name it. Days are often so full that we neglect time with our precious Savior, snap at our children, and go to bed having exchanged only a few brief sentences with our spouse. This only increases every time a new child is added. But we are only human, we cannot be multiple places at once, meet every whim or take on every task requested of us, and neither can our children. What if instead of rushing from appointment to meeting to practice and running ourselves and our children ragged, we said “no” to some good things in order to say “yes” the very best (eternal) things? How we spend our time reflects what we value. Let’s take some time to evaluate our schedules!

1. Start with biblical mandates like meeting together within the body of Christ (Heb. 10:25) and instructing your children in the Lord (Deut 6:7). What do those look like on a daily basis in your home? Are they given priority? Here are a few ideas to get you started: church as a family, dinner together, family devotions, serving neighbors, 1-on-1 discipleship, missions, foster care, individual devotions, etc. Please note that each of our schedules will look different based on God’s calling on our lives, the number of children we have to care for, and our unique families (Eccles 3:1-8), but we want to love what the Lord loves and have it be reflected in our lives.
2. Take some time to sit down with your spouse this week to pray and decide what your family priorities are and even what changes may need to be made. If your children are old enough, involve them in a discussion if you feel it’s appropriate. They will learn valuable lessons in how to make their own scheduling decisions. If they are a bit too young for a discussion, once you have decided on your next steps for your family schedule, call a family meeting and communicate how and why you’re making these decisions.
3. Use your favorite calendar to “schedule” your non-negotiables, church, work, devotions, service ... but don’t forget time for grocery shopping, and meal preparation, sadly dinner won’t make itself!
4. Evaluate commitments as you add them in. Can we physically make it happen? No one can be two places at once. Are there conflicts? This should make it easy for us (Matt 5:37). Can we still serve others? Do we need rest?

If you’re feeling overwhelmed with the busyness of your life, take some time to evaluate what commitments you can eliminate. Can kids take turns in sports or compete on the same team? What an opportunity for them to practice dying to self and becoming each other’s biggest cheerleaders! Does your family need to build in a bit of rest and family time?

Can you be more efficient with time? Need to run to Home Depot? Take a kid and get some one-on-one time. A bit of intentionality in our days can reap great rewards in our families!

Tips for Surviving Homework

Kellie Newman

The term homework can stir up a variety of emotions. I've been asked to write some practical tips for how to get homework done without killing each other. Even being asked to write about this topic in particular stirred up some angst in me, ha! I am a mom of three: presently one high schooler, one middle schooler and one elementary student and also throughout their school careers we've homeschooled, private schooled and public schooled. I also have a teaching credential and work as an independent study teacher so I do have some experience in this avenue. Before jumping into some practical advice that I've gleaned in my 20 years of experience as both a teacher and a mom, I think it is important to define some terms.

First, traditional homework can be defined as extra work that is being assigned to a student from a teacher outside of the home, that typically has to be done after the school day, during family time, in some cases when the student is tired and spent from their full day at school. In this instance the parent has no say in what homework is sent home, therefore there may be little to no buy-in on behalf of the parent regarding the value of the work assigned. On the contrary, we have many students at Faith that are home educated. These students don't really have homework as it is traditionally defined, but the parent is still in a position of encouraging them to do their schoolwork. The core difference is that it can usually be completed before the evening, when everyone is tired and there are all sorts of family activities, and the parent typically has buy-in on what is being asked of the child. What is more challenging in the home education model is that it's not uncommon for children to push back more against mom than an outside teacher. Keep these differences in mind as you consider which strategies may help you.

Second, it is important to consider the student. There is no one description that accurately characterizes every student. Even in my own home, with just three children, they are all inherently unique in their strengths and struggles, which means they often require different practical strategies. It's important to keep this in mind when trying to get through your child's homework or schoolwork. What worked brilliantly for one may crash and burn for another. Sometimes we as parents need to try many different tools to find the right one, and then sometimes the child changes and we have to go back to the toolbox again.

Below you will find an eclectic list of ideas to survive the homework battle:

1. **Consider the student's physical and relational needs:** Is the student hungry, overstimulated, sad from a hard experience, et cetera? If any of these are the case, address those needs first. Maybe they would benefit from a few minutes of snuggling and talking about their day, or choosing a snack before starting? Maybe they need to get some wiggles out, or maybe they're overstimulated and it's too noisy for them to focus, so help them find a quiet space to get to work in. Giving the student some voice and choice in this goes a long way, but you can set limits. "Want a break first, ok, do you want 20 minutes or 30 minutes before it's time to get to work?"

2. **Prioritize relationship over homework:** yes, there will be times this is strictly a disciplinary issue and you will need to discipline the child for disobedience or defiance, but sometimes there are other struggles under the surface. Maybe you want them just to buckle down and get it done, but they really do need rest first? Maybe what looks like delay is actually a child who doesn't know how to do the task at hand and they need some encouragement and support? Keep your relationship with the child and their growth in character as the top priority, even if it means sometimes letting the teacher know that you had to set that assignment aside.
3. **Help with new skills:** Yes, even if your child is going to school and you did not assign the homework, sometimes you need to step in and help the child more than the teacher intended for. While the teacher may have taught a lesson, it's entirely possible your student didn't understand it or isn't developmentally ready for that (Hello, reading fluency passages!). If your child is overwhelmed, I recommend a strategy called scaffolding. Sit by them and reassure them it's going to be okay, you are going to help them. Completely do the first problem for them (a.k.a., modeling). If you don't want to do it on their paper directly then pull out another piece of paper, write the problem on there and model the answer, talking through how you got there and then they can copy it onto their paper. Then, start modeling the second problem, but this time gently phase back your scaffolding, maybe asking them if they know the last step. As they gain success and confidence, continue scaling back your help. Don't get up when they're ready to try one on their own, sit there and encourage them. Did they get some or all of it right, heap on the praise!
4. **Angry or hopeless** ("I'll never be able to do this!")? This is often how being overwhelmed looks in children. Most children are not great at expressing that they are overwhelmed or even recognizing it, they just get upset and even throw a fit. Even if it's not a new skill on their homework that's setting them over the edge it's still possible they are overwhelmed. This could be caused by physical needs or other emotional factors from something else that happened that day, but it also could be that they just feel the task at hand is bigger than they can handle. If it's the latter you could use the modeling/scaffolding support strategy or you could help them break the task into smaller chunks and make a plan for how to tackle each one. I recommend some sort of reward at the end of each one (positive praise, a hug, a break, a yummy treat, etc.).
5. **Growth mindset:** I find it helpful to talk regularly about the fact that mistakes are useful tools. If they got something wrong there's no reason to fret, it's an opportunity to learn from.
6. **Reward chart:** If the homework battle does seem largely behavioral then a reward chart might be helpful in reinforcing the positive behavior you're seeking, namely completing their homework within a reasonable time frame and without complaint. First, talk about that goal and then show your child the reward chart. Depending on age, choose an appropriate amount of times they need to complete that and an appropriate reward. Younger students might have the chance to earn a reward daily (but using a chart where you put a stamp or sticker is still helpful) while older students may be able to work for a reward at the end of a successful week. The

reward doesn't have to be big, maybe they earn a little candy or ten minutes more of tech time. Some students are motivated by a time while others are exasperated by it, but it's worth a try. Be sure to reflect on how it's going and make adjustments until the routine works for both of you. Negative consequences and discipline are important and certainly have their place, but a reward system is also a great tool to employ for something you're having to get through daily.

7. **Get help:** Sometimes you just need help. That could mean searching YouTube or Khan Academy for a math video, reaching out to the teacher for extra support, seeking out educational testing or even changing school model. Don't be afraid to ask for help, there are so many resources as well as brothers and sisters in Christ who have walked a similar path and might have an idea you haven't thought of yet!

Gentle Correction Cory Gustke

I. The Portrait of Gentleness

a. Review: What is the Goal of Parenting?

Shepherding My Child's Heart – 1 Sam. 16:7, Luke 6:45

—Tedd Tripp

“The goal of parenting *is not control of behavior, but rather heart and life change.*”
—Parenting by Paul David Tripp

b. What is Biblical Gentleness?

i. Contrasted with

1. Weakness – 1 Kings 19:11-12
2. Quarreling -- 2 Tim. 2:24-25
3. Harsh Words -- Prov. 15:1, Eph. 6:4
4. Wildness -- Job 41:1-3

ii. Compared to

1. Strength -- Gal. 6:1, Prov. 25:15
2. Respect -- 1 Pet. 3:15
3. Humility -- Eph. 4:2, Col. 3:12

iii. Modeled by Jesus -- Matt. 11:28-30

iv. Our definition:

Gentleness is God-given strength under control.

II. The Power of Gentleness

- a. God the Father Chose Gentleness
- b. Gentleness Models the Gospel
- c. Gentleness is the Surest Path to Your Child's Heart

III. The Pursuit of Gentleness

- a. Provided by the Spirit -- Gal. 5:22-23
- b. Prayer
 - i. For God in our lives
 - ii. For God in their lives
- c. Time in Scripture
- d. Embrace Christ-like Compassion
- e. Your Secret Weapon: Asking Questions

I.a.i. -- 1

1 Sam. 16:7 (ESV) – “For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”

I.a.i. -- 2

Luke 6:45 (ESV) - The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

I.b.i.1.

1 Kings 19:11-13a (NIV) - ¹¹ The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by."

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

I.b.ii.1.

Proverbs 25:15 (NIV) - Through patience a ruler can be persuaded,
and a gentle tongue can break a bone.

I.b.ii.3.

Ephesians 4:2 (NIV) - Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

I.b.iii.

Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV) – ²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

III.a.

Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV) -- ...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control;

Educational Options and Considerations

Shannon Jackson

While God's Word does not specify what educational option parents must choose for their children, the principles God has provided in His Word, along with trusted counsel, should assist parents with this decision. Ultimately, preparing children to live for Christ in this world will look different for each family.

Public School

Public school provides a consistent, predictable schedule for families and removes much of the daily responsibility of teaching from the parents. It offers a student options in almost every area of their school experience. There will be options with their courses, options with their extracurriculars, and plenty of options for friends. Exposure to a wide variety of areas of interest may help a child choose hobbies or even a career. There is also an abundance of opportunities for parents to discuss the differences between God's ways and the world's ways, while observing how each child responds to these differences. As a part of a public school community, families will naturally be able to practice living on mission for the Gospel along with their children.

Schedules & Requirements:

- Early mornings and pick up times determined by the school
- Family vacations limited to summers or breaks given by the school district
- Children away from the home five days a week for the majority of the day
- Minimal parental investment required during school hours
- Daily homework after schools hours (increasing in time as the child gets older)
- Parents with traditional work schedules may appreciate this routine, while families with more flexible schedules, may find this prohibitive

Challenges & Opportunities:

- Many believe the greatest challenge of public school is the exposure to worldly influences and philosophies
- Lack of parental control regarding the things a child will see and hear from other students or from teachers
- Children may be treated harshly because of their beliefs
- This exposure may provide opportunities for Gospel-centered conversations with one's child
- For those children who have made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, it may also be a test of their faith and allow parents to guide them through this testing

Finally, a parent may send their child to public school without much commitment. However, there are usually plenty of ways for parents to be involved in the public school through parent associations, athletic teams, various clubs, helping in the classroom, etc.

This provides ways for parents to stay more connected and aware of what takes place within the walls of the public school, as well as gives families gospel opportunities with teachers, and other families.

Private School

Private school also provides a consistent, predictable schedule for families and removes much of the daily responsibility of teaching from the parents. It offers smaller class sizes, and in many cases, personal relationships for students and parents with school staff and faculty. At a Christian private school, Christian parents may find that the teaching of the school reflects their values, and the school seeks to partner with parents in training their children in Godly character development. Often, these schools will require Bible classes each year and chapel services with Bible teachers on a regular basis. Many private schools will also be able to provide a number of options for athletics, areas of studies, and other extracurricular activities. Because the size of private schools are often much smaller than public, these options are usually fewer, but more accessible to students. Many would say that because of this smaller size, private schools provide more of a family atmosphere where students can be known in a deeper way and genuinely cared for by Godly teachers and administrators.

Schedules & Requirements:

- Early mornings and release times determined by the school, five days a week
- Traditional academic calendar dictating family vacations, trips, etc.
- Potentially more flexibility for taking kids out of school for family reasons than public school, but generally, plans must work around a predetermined holiday and break schedule.
- Typically seeks a higher level of support and involvement from parents
- Significant financial commitment in the form of school tuition
- May also require regular fundraising and participation in classroom or campus activities such as parties, school wide social events, field trips, et cetera
- Without state funding, private schools often rely on families to fill in gaps in resources
- Daily homework after schools hours (increasing in time as the child gets older)

Challenges & Opportunities:

- Because of the smaller size, some kids struggle to find a place where they fit or to find activities to fit their interests and needs
- Less options for friends may leave a student left out from the tight knit groups that are often a part of a private school campus
- Parents anticipate a private school will shelter their children from worldly influences, but the concerns parents have about public school campuses usually exist on private school campuses as well
- Fewer resources may mean less challenging classes or qualified teachers, but more opportunities for parents to be a part of campus culture

- Families have the opportunity to guide their child through these challenges and aid them in understanding appropriate expectations for Christian communities

HomeSchool

While public or private schools offer families consistency and predictability, home schooling offers families the most flexibility. Home schooling provides the freedom to complete schooling tasks on whatever schedule a family may choose. Practically, a family could begin their day early or late. They could accomplish school activities at home or at a park. They are free to travel during any time of the year and work around non-traditional work schedules as needed. They may choose areas of study based on parent proficiency or student interest. They may choose to learn as a family, grouping multiple children together for certain subjects, or cater to the needs of each child. There is naturally a greater responsibility on the parent for the daily tasks, but homeschooling affords parents the option of utilizing outside resources for these tasks (online classes, local resource centers, etc.).

Schedules & Requirements:

- Majority of education time will take place within the home and with the family
- Students usually learn in very small groups or independently
- Families must provide a physical place for learning to take place (school room, kitchen table, etc.)
- Parents have the freedom to spend time on the subjects and content they believe to be most valuable
- Communities often have groups to partner with families that provide peer friendships and opportunities to learn alongside other families but also add responsibilities and time commitments
- Ultimately the responsibility to accomplish educational goals rests on the parents
- Public charter schools (if available) provide support and accountability for families but also add oversight and requirements from the state which some families do not prefer.

Challenges & Opportunities:

- Highest level of required investment from parents
- Parents must make choices regarding educational philosophies and curriculum
- Parent must create and maintain schedules and plans that will enable their children to progress academically each year, often with little accountability
- For parents who lack strong organizational skills, keeping everyone on track may be particularly challenging
- The cost of supplies, curriculum, educational trips, athletics and any other extracurriculars will also be the responsibility of the parents, unless families partner with a public charter school
- Homeschooling allows families to spend much time together, which provides constant opportunities for personal and spiritual growth

- While the amount of time together may be a blessing, it also requires more effort and may be a heavy burden on the parent primarily at home
- Many children enjoy the more relaxed pace of homeschooling, but others miss the greater social opportunities and structure that traditional schooling may provide
- Likewise, the amount of time that homeschooling affords a family to spend together may create unnecessary strain on some relationships (parent/child or child/child)

After careful thought, prayer, and seeking wisdom from others, parents should choose the schooling option they believe will best help them disciple their children toward academic and spiritual growth. It is important to remember, however, that no choice has to be a forever choice. Parents are free to change course if and whenever necessary. Whatever choice is made, families can and should move forward, ultimately trusting their children to the Lord.

How To De-Escalate the Frustrated Child Under 10

Rachel Fox

When our child is losing their mind, it's easy to respond quickly. As parents, we want to solve the problem so we seek a resolution that brings peace (and sometimes for us alone, if we are honest). However, sometimes it's not easy to diffuse the situation. We can have children that are easily frustrated, emotional, and seemingly overwhelmed. If we are in God's Word and walking with Him, however, He promises us His presence. God promises to give us the insight and wisdom needed (James 1:5).

Children love security. Discipline and routines are the rules that create their world. These things help them feel loved and safe. Many times when a child feels out of control, it is a response to something that doesn't fit in their framework. A child should not feel the pressure of having to set the rules of their world, they need their parents to do this for them; and then to follow through to make sure those rules stay. Children need to know that their parents love them, even if they feel overwhelmed.

Sometimes it can be a physical experience alone that escalates a child. Many children can be overwhelmed in a new situation (first time in an airport) or one that is loud (a sports game). At these times, their reactions are not inherently sinful, they are just overwhelmed. In each of these, they need reassurance of their parents love. But the parent must determine if it is just a physical reaction or if it is stemming from the heart.

Whatever large emotion your child is feeling, here are some steps that may help you de-escalate your frustrated child:

- A. **Analyze "Why":** Are there any environmental reasons? Lack of sleep or food? Not that this excuses behavior but they may help calm your child down. Are you causing the frustration? If so, is it reasonable or not? Changing course often causes more frustration so don't change your course unless absolutely necessary. Calm them down so they are able to talk with you.
- B. **Physical Things to Change:**
 1. Remove them from the situation causing frustration.
 2. Give them space. Gives you time to evaluate yourself and them to calm down.
 3. Make sure they're calm. Know what they need to calm down. Is it to be held? Space? When they are younger, mostly under the age 4, distraction will often help calm them down. It's different for every child and age. When they are little they often need your help to settle them down. This doesn't affirm their reactions or sin, you are helping them to do something physical—calming down.
 4. Once they are calmed down, then address the heart issue that started the extreme emotions. Usually at this point the child is able to start talking about what started these big emotions. And they are able to

understand and listen to you. It takes a lot of patience to go through this process, but the desire is to reach your child's heart, not just their behavior.

- C. **Preventive Things to Do:** Know your child and what they need. Set good habits. Set them up for success and not failure. Many times we can see the habits they need before they can. Help them by making good habits. Focus on them and not yourself.

Lots of things can set off our children, and it's normal. It doesn't mean they're necessarily different. Food and sleep is usually the root of any intense situation, which is why I look to those first. Other things too that a child may not be able to communicate: new experience or situation, loud sounds, change in routine, and so forth. Prayer goes a long way in helping see what may be causing your child to lose it. Along with prayer, it's important for you to assess the situation and make decisions. Your child depends on you to make those decisions and this creates the security that they are longing for. And if it starts from a sin issue, then be consistent with consequences and explanation. That provides the assurance and safety they need. Every child longs to feel the assurance of their parents' love and protection; just as we long for that from our heavenly Father.