

“Better Parents; Better Family Part 2”

Homework Check:

1. Husbands did you ask your wives “What is one thing that I can do to let you know that I love you the way Jesus loves the church”?
2. Pray with your spouse daily?
3. Tell your kids you love them daily?

Working definition of “Better Family”: A ‘Better Family’ is a family (whatever the makeup) that chooses and strives to be ‘more excellent’ together by following Jesus and applying Kingdom principles to family dynamics

A ‘Better Family’ is a family that follows Jesus
A ‘Better Marriage’ is a marriage that follows Jesus
‘Better Parents’ are parents that follows Jesus

Why Fathers Have Gray Hair

A father passed by his son’s bedroom and was astonished to see the bed nicely made up and everything neat and tidy. Then he saw an envelope propped up on the pillow. It was addressed, “Dad.” With the worst premonition, he opened the envelope and read the letter with trembling hands:

Dear Dad,

It is with great regret and sorrow that I’m writing you. I had to elope with my new girlfriend because I wanted to avoid a scene with you and Mom. I’ve been finding real passion with Joan, and she is so nice. I knew you would not approve of her because of all her piercings, tattoos, tight motorcycle clothes, and the fact that she is so much older than I am. It’s not just her passion, Dad. She really *gets* me.

Joan says that we are going to be very happy. She owns a trailer in the woods and has a stack of firewood—just enough for the whole winter. We share a dream of having many children.

Please don’t worry, Dad. I’m 15 and I know how to take care of myself. I’m sure we’ll be back to visit someday so you can get to know your grandchildren.

Your son, Chad

P.S. Dad, none of the above is true. I'm over at Tommy's house. I just wanted to remind you that there are worse things in life than the report card that's in my desk drawer. I love you! Call when it is safe for me to come home.

TENSION/COMMON GROUND

My most favorite 'job' is being a father

Desire to be a good parent, even with the 4th (Don't give up, 'Quit parenting' example)

Parenting is challenging...

- Challenging because
- Don't come with instructions
- Don't have prior experience
- Society today (Social Media); society/culture telling them certain things are acceptable, that we their parents don't find acceptable - friction there...
- Kids have a lot of pressure today (school, sports, success, social)
- Information available at fingertips - access to lots of stuff, good and bad

And given ALL that, we're all striving to do the best we can parents

We gotta work on ourselves for our kids sakes - NEED JESUS to get better

Worship Note: Children need Jesus

Stages of Parenting: (Focus on the Family)

1. Commander (Loving Discipline)= Ages 1 through 5
 - Hebrews 12:10-11 (NIV)
10 They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. 11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.
 - In the first years of a child's life, a **parent does everything for him**. The parent functions as a **benevolent dictator**, telling the child who to listen to, what to eat, when to go to bed, how to perform a task.
 - Boundaries= Actions have consequences, both good and bad
 - Chet Holliday- "Spend the first two years teaching them to walk and talk and the next 18 telling them to 'sit down and be quiet'!" Haha
2. Coach (Training)= Ages 5-12
 - Ephesians 6:4, Matthew 22:37-39
 - Choices and options= never tempting them to do wrong or foolish

- In this stage our kids learn the natural consequences of their choices. We do that by letting them fail when the consequences are small. This helps them to develop the internal mechanism to drive their own choices. Parents must work hard to create a conversational culture in the home during this stage, creating an intentional environment for training.

3. Counselor= Ages 13-18

- Proverbs 19:18, 20, 27(NIV)

18 Discipline your children, for in that there is hope;
do not be a willing party to their death.

20 Listen to advice and accept discipline,
and at the end you will be counted among the wise.

27 Stop listening to instruction, my son,
and you will stray from the words of knowledge.

- The day dawns for every parent when he or she is no longer the driving influence in a child's life.
- The task of the loving parent is to encourage a child's growth from dependence to independence; it is especially important in this phase of parenthood.
- Too many of us continue to parent our teenagers in much the same way we parented them as toddlers or grade-schoolers. When our kids begin to strain against the reins, like a horse that's eager to run, we pull back hard — as though it's wrong for them to seek independence. But that's exactly the purpose of the teen years. In fact, we should encourage that drive for independence and channel it in the right direction.
- The purpose at this stage is to release your kids to establish their own biblical convictions. I encouraged them to take responsibility in decision making, and they responded. I offered suggestions and warned them about the potential consequences of poor decisions, but I tried to leave the decision up to them as often as possible.
- Take the risk that your children will make poor choices, and sometimes they do. But little by little, they become capable of finding the right course.
- My kids and sports
- MENTOR

4. Consultant (Friendship)= 18 and older

- Proverbs 27:11 (NIV)

11 Be wise, my son, and bring joy to my heart;
then I can answer anyone who treats me with contempt.

- Words can't describe driving your 'baby' to college for freshman year
- Less frightening if the first three phases went well
- The task of parenting isn't done at this stage; it is no longer one of proactive involvement but of patient availability. The parent in this phase must hope, pray and wait.
- Involves letting go

- For nearly two decades, the parent has been the child's commander, coach or counselor, but trying to prolong any of those roles will invite resistance and perhaps even resentment.
- Advise and encourage, but resist the urge to bail your kids out or protect them from the consequences of their poor choices. Pray for them and cheer them on in life.

You'll find that the phases of parenthood aren't entirely measurable or scientific. The phases overlap each other; one phase begins long before the previous phase passes completely. And different children will demand differing degrees of flexibility in moving from one phase to the next.

Ephesians 6:4 (NIV)

4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up [Gk. Ektrepheite is literally "nourish and provide for"] **in the training and instruction of the Lord.**

'Better Family' Kingdom Principles:

Obedience

- Need to be Obedient to Lord with regards to raising our kids
- Spent time on this last week, 'Discipline is **good**'; breaking your kid is **bad**'

Sowing and Reaping

- Sow in tears
- Reap in Joy
- Tears water the seed
- Loss of Child, difficult relationship
- Must sacrifice in one season in order to reap in another season

Forgiveness

- **Matthew 18:21-22** Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.[Or *seventy times seven*]
- Be generous with forgiveness; called to forgive as Jesus has forgiven us
- Gotta be willing to forgive our kids, but more importantly, ask for THEIR forgiveness when we screw up
 - Something I have strived to do with our kids...both when look back would have appreciated that happening more in our own lives...that our parents would have taken more ownership for some things that didn't go great...

Worship Note: Sometimes **parents** need to ask their **kids** for **forgiveness**

Closing