

Parenting on Purpose

An interactive workshop



Oakwood
CHURCH

March 30, 2019

Introduction

All children are asking two questions of their parents:

1. **Will you be involved with me?**
2. **Can I get my own way?**

The first question is about love and the second about authority. Kids need parents to consistently say “Yes, I will be involved with you,” and “No, until you make wise, godly choices, you cannot get your own way.”

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” Ephesians 6:2

The responsibility to raise children to know, love and serve the Lord rests squarely with parents – and particularly with fathers. We must not tear our children down by our own selfishness and anger, but we must bring them up. This involves both discipline and instruction – correcting wrong behavior and teaching truth.

And it is essential to remember that the only way to obey the instructions in Ephesians 5:21-6:9 is by first obeying **the command in 5:18 to “be filled with the Spirit.”** The wisdom (5:15) guidance and power (5:18) for parenting must come from Him. Then as parents so experience the love of Christ (3:14-21) that we overflow with that love in our marriage (5:21-32) and in our homes, the results of 5:19-21) will begin to describe our families:

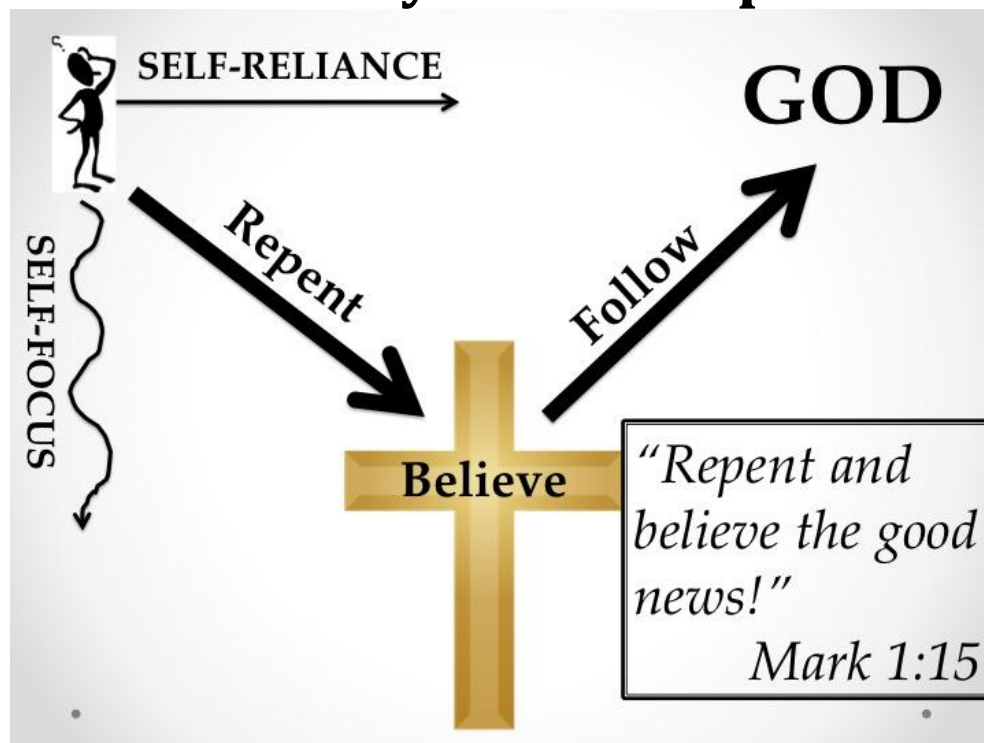
- Speaking worshipfully (5:19a)
- Rejoicing internally (5:19b)
- Giving thanks continually (5:20) and
- Submitting mutually (5:21)
 - Wives serving husbands respectfully (5:22;32)
 - Husbands serving wives sacrificially (5:25)
 - Children obeying parents joyfully (6:1-4)

With this overall goal to establish loving, Christ-centered authority in the home, what follows are practical discussion starters in a workshop called Parenting on Purpose. This combines teachings from Gary Chapman’s *The Five Love Languages*, James Dobson’s *Dare to Discipline*, Paul Tripp’s *Age of Opportunity* (see also Ted Tripp’s *Shepherding a Child’s Heart*) and Cline and Fay’s *Parenting with Love and Logic*.

Kids and teenagers are always asking those two questions of love and authority. The art of parenting is to answer those clearly and consistently while **pointing to Jesus as the Source of real love and the ultimate Authority**. Parents are shepherds of the heart (Tripp), not just policemen of behavior. We must “shape the will without breaking the spirit” (Dobson). Therefore the gospel must be a regular part of our conversations with our kids. As they make choices (both good and bad) we must take opportunities to teach them how to trust in Jesus and walk with Him.

Christian parents seek to walk the central path of the gospel – not falling into self-reliant religion or self-indulgent rebellion. We don't want to raise prodigal children who will turn away from God. Nor do we want to raise moralistic older brothers who appear righteous on the surface but internally are filled with selfishness and pride. We have to model a vibrant relationship with God, teach regularly about His love and grace and talk about Jesus as much as possible (Deut. 6:4-7).

The Way of the Gospel



Then as kids grow up we need to apply the “**V of Love**” (Cline and Fay): giving children and teens increasing freedom through choices – starting with small, low-risk choices when they are young, teaching and empowering them to make more significant decisions as they grow up – so that when they reach 18 they are independently making wise, godly choices.

Many parents invert this “V” – giving young children almost complete autonomy as toddlers and preschoolers, and then steadily removing privileges and choices as they enter the teen years. This is an almost certain path to teen rebellion, and it reflects the failure of parents to answer the two questions well in the early years. Instead, parents need to make it clear when their children are small that “your job is to obey; our job is to teach you to obey,” and then intentionally train them to make wise choices that grow out of a living relationship with Jesus.

SCHEDULE:

- 9:00 Arrival
- 9:15 Intro & Session 1 – **Love** – Will you be involved with me? (p. 5-6)
- 10:00 Break & Snacks
- 10:15 Session 2 – **Shepherding** – Can I change and grow? (p. 7, 11-13)
- 11:15 Session 3 – **Authority** – Can I get my own way? (p. 14-15,19)

Big Idea: Let your goals for parenting drive your strategies and styles.

Objectives:

- Understand the four primary goals of parenting.
- Feel a sense of confidence and hope to develop effective strategies and styles.
- Choose one particular goal on which to work and think through the best strategy and style to accomplish it.

A variety of parenting styles we've all seen...

[Get your kids to brush their teeth, put on PJs and get in bed in these different styles]:

1. Drill Sergeant
2. Affectionate Counselor / Therapist
3. Ditzzy Blonde / Valley girl
4. Superhero
5. Super villain
6. Humble, obedient servant / English butler
7. Parent

Overview – 1) Goals & strategies; 2) Emotional Maturity / Relationship; 3) Wisdom & Responsibility 4) Heart-shepherding; 5) World-changing

1. Goals, Strategies & Styles

Your parenting Style is the product of your parenting Goals and Strategies.

Group Breakdown: from the style, deduce the goals and strategies –

Parenting Style	Primary Goal	Primary Strategy
Drill Sergeant	Control behavior	Discipline, yell, shout, threaten
Rescue Hero	Prevent pain or discomfort	Help in any way possible
Prison Warden	Prevent misbehavior	Severe restrictions, punishments
Laissez-Faire	Keep the kid happy	Let 'em do what they want
King Parent	Parental comfort	Make 'em serve, or else
Servant Parent	A "wonderful" childhood	Satisfy their every need or whim
Coach	Lasting relationship	Spend time and talk

We need a clear idea of our goals, in order to come up with effective strategies that will shape our parenting style.

What are the major goals of parenting?

That our children:

1. **Feel Loved** – emotionally mature, with a strong feeling of being loved, accepted, valued and cherished so they can form a positive self-image and become confident, independent adults. They will become our friends for life. “When your kids are old enough to chose their own friends, will they have any reason to choose you?”
2. **Love God** – The goal is heart change, not just behavior control. Our actions flow out of our hearts. If the tree is good at heart, it will bear good fruit. Sometimes you have to release the external controls in order to shape the heart.
3. **Become Godly** – When Mom and Dad aren’t hovering around, monitoring every decision and its fallout, what kind of decisions will they make? Will they have Self-Mastery? There’s a reason that the majority of church-going kids quit church in college.
4. **Become World-Changers** – Young adults who will not be influenced and corrupted by a dark, dirty world, but who have caught the vision to be seasoning salt and eye-opening light to all around them.

What are the WRONG goals for parenting?

- *Total Control*: controlling their every thought and action like little robots.
- *Total Protection*: insulating them from every temptation or mistake...
- *Kids forever*: keeping them safe in the nest with us forever (they don’t belong to us, they never have).
- *Meet my needs*: they WILL serve me, respect me, appreciate me and impress others with what amazing kids I have (vicarious living).
 - These things can become idols in the hearts of a parent and must be treated like idols: destroyed, totally devoted to the Lord.

What are the best strategies and styles to accomplish the primary goals of parenting?

Primary Goals	Primary Strategies	Primary Styles
Feel Loved > emotional maturity (early years) Lifelong Friendship (teen years)	Time + love + communication	Nurturer, Protector, Shepherd → Coach / Friend
Love God: heart devotion	Model & Worship together	Pastor, Shepherd, Mentor
Become Godly > wisdom, responsibility	Study & Model Biblical Values & Process Real Life Consequences	King / Queen / Teacher → Coach
World Changing Vision	Model & Discuss Biblical Mission	Coach

Key Principle: Know your goals and let them define your style and priorities.

May your child...

1. Feel Loved – “Will you be involved with me?”

Big Idea: Time, love, conversation and grace are essential for a child to feel loved and to lay the foundation for a lasting parent-child friendship.

Objectives:

- Understand how to show love to your unique children
- Desire a lifelong friendship filled with love and grace
- Evaluate and adjust your daily / weekly schedule to put 1st things 1st

4 Essentials to Show Love:

1. Time – if other things take your time and attention from your family, the relationship will not grow.

- List your commitments - anything you are regularly involved in [school, work, sports, activities, ministries, hobbies, *family*, etc.]:

- Underline the three that get the majority of your TIME.
- Now go back and circle the three that are most important to you. Are they the three you underlined? Start this week to practice the discipline of **scheduling your priorities**. If it's important to you, lock it into your calendar – whatever it takes, make it happen.

2. Love – practicing the Five Love Languages: time, words, gifts, service and appropriate touch.



15
min.

Discussion Starter – How do you use the languages of time, words, gifts, service and touch to show your love for your kids? How do your kids use the love languages to show love for you and each other? Have you noticed differences in what language works best for the different members of your family? How have you adjusted to address those differences?

3. Conversation – mature friendship is seen in the ability to communicate honestly and openly toward mutual understanding. What begins as a one-sided parent-child relationship should become a two-sided friend-friend relationship as the child becomes an adult. Since every child is unique, every parent-child relationship will be unique!

4. Grace – the adhesive that holds a relationship together is grace on both sides.

- The unconditional guarantee: “Nothing you do can make us love you more. Nothing you do can make us love you less.” A revelation of God’s relationship with His children. My experience with the Father’s love – even if I wrecked Dad’s new car, I would still be his son. Nothing can ever change the FACT that I am his child.

“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” 1 John 3:1

“[Nothing] will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
Rom. 8:39

- The home should be the SAFEST place to share hurts, failures, temptations and (yes!) sins.
- Maintain open communication no matter what
- Grace is a two way street. Parents need grace as much as (if not more than) their kids.
- God’s vision: see past the sin on the surface to the good underneath and the amazing potential of what we can become.

“I have a confession...”
“I forgive you. What is it?”

For Further Reflection:

- Conversation: How well do you listen? Are you connecting with your kids?
- Grace: How good are you at saying “I’m sorry”? How are you at encouraging an attitude of “I forgave you ahead of time”?



Key Principle: Guarantee unconditional love and acceptance.

“If you focus on loving your child, everything else will fall into place.”
What Every Child Needs – MOPS Int’l.

May your child...

2. Love God - Shepherding the Heart

Big Idea: To help kids become devoted to God, parents must be Models, Shepherds and Farmers of the heart.

Objectives:

- Parents understand your job to model, teach, talk and equip your children
- Feel convicted to strengthen your own devotion to God: cultivating a devoted heart.
- Discuss how to incorporate family devotions into the weekly routine.

Overview: As with helping kids become wise and responsible, it is frustrating and ineffective to force them into rigid boxes of behavior – ***like stapling fruit onto a tree***. We can make them obey us out of the fear of getting caught and punished... Instead, we must deal with the heart – creating an atmosphere in which a heart for God can grow and mature → bearing fruit in worship, devotion, fellowship, love, wisdom and good choices.

The Wrong Way:

- You **MUST** do your devotions every day! [Yes! Drill Sergeant!]
- You **MUST** sit and listen to the Bible every day!
- Do as I say, not as I do... [I'm not reading the Bible but you better!]

Your kids are going to become a little like us [church leaders] and a lot like you; like it or not.

The Principle of **OWNERSHIP**: the central faith process of the teenage years.

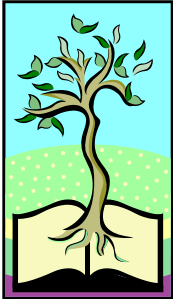
- Dumping out everything they've ever learned, considering each piece, and re-packing the ones they choose.
- Abstract thought has become possible. Individuality and self-understanding begin to blossom – Who am I? Moving toward independence and freedom (car, distance, choices).
- Teen years are a crossroads; many choose the broad road – will yours follow the narrow?
- 2 Examples: devo's and baptism...



How do you help a child begin to “own” his or her faith? How do you help them become devoted to God?

2 illustrations - Farming and Shepherding:

Farming (Matt. 13:3-8)



The Seed of faith:

The Soil of faith:

The Fruit of faith:

The seed of faith: a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

- What everyone needs is not reformed behavior but a NEW HEART:

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.” Ezek. 36:26-27

- Whose work is this? **God** is responsible for “drawing” people to Himself (Jn. 6:44) → PRAY!
- We are responsible to cultivate and plant seeds, reaping when ready → Be Faithful...

You are not the Holy Spirit – He can do ANYTHING: “With God all things are possible.” Mk. 10:27 in response to “Who then can be saved?”

The soil of faith: Matt. 13:3-8 –

- (1) path: lack of understanding;
- (2) rocks: lack of depth;
- (3) thorns: lack of commitment → distraction. All three: no fruit.
- (4) Good soil: soft heart, receptive to the Word, responsive to the Word → fruit.

The fruit of faith – love, joy, peace...

Consider: What have been the major spiritual turning points or landmark events in your walk with God so far? What individuals have had the greatest spiritual impact on you? How?

Environment in Which A Heart for God can Grow:

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ **Love the LORD** your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to **be upon your hearts**. ⁷ **Impress them on your children**. **Talk about** them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ **Tie them** as symbols on your hands and **bind them** on your foreheads. ⁹ **Write them** on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

- Parents **model** a passionate pursuit of God, in daily relationship and regular worship, fellowship, etc. This makes the faith attractive and validates your teaching.
 - This requires TIME and intentional interaction. Do projects together; go places together; be with your kids so they can see you act and react in the daily routines of life.
 - Church is a positive priority.
 - Balanced perspective on other life priorities: school, sports, career, activities, hobbies, etc.
- Parents **teach** basic Biblical truths, as they live out Biblical principles (modeling).
 - Family worship is a priority and is engaging – Scripture, prayer, etc → Audience TARGET! (Answer questions; study relevant issues; don’t lecture or preach; “Don’t exasperate them – lead them and lift them up!”)
 - Theology 101 – Christmas, Easter, creation, sin, etc. [God, Christ, Spirit, Mankind, etc.]
 - Parents **talk**: (Deut. 6:4-9) Teachable moments point to God (answered prayer, blessings, creation, etc.) and **reveal the heart** (see next session).
 - Consistently highlight the Gospel:
- Parents **encourage and equip** their kids to seek God personally.
 - Personal devo’s, small groups and witness (up, in, outreach).
 - Teach them to fish – Don’t always read, study, interpret and expound Scripture for them.
 - Ownership opportunities: conferences, retreats, camps → life decisions.

For Further Reflection:

- How have you effectively built Biblical teaching into your family life?
- How have you encouraged and equipped your children to build their own relationship with God?

Shepherding

Psalm 23

<i>"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake."</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents faithfully meet the needs of their children: food, clothing, shelter, love, encouragement, spiritual guidance and teaching; - Parents lead their kids to oases in the Word and in prayer; in worship and fellowship. - Parents provide consistent boundaries within which their children can safely and freely live: the Telling issues (e.g. Church); the Selling and Participating issues (e.g. devo's, small groups). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kids trust and obey their parental shepherds; and God Himself - They will meet my needs and guide me to Spiritual Feeding Grounds: - Kids seek out and enjoy green pastures and still waters of relationship with God. - Kids respect and respond to verbal Boundaries: Trust & Obey. "My sheep know my voice... and follow me." John 10
<i>"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; Your rod and your staff, they comfort me..."</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents guarantee unconditional love – a permanent relationship, love and acceptance no matter what: lifelong friendship. - Parents protect and discipline their children : Spiritual Protection: the rod of attack (vs. wolves) and the staff of discipline and rescue. (Prov. 12:1; 13:24; 15:5; 19:18; 22:15; 29:17). In the context of loving relationship - "you are with me..." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kids invest in family relationships. - Kids appreciate discipline: <p style="text-align: center;">"Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid." Proverbs 12:1</p>
<i>"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil..."</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents nurture and heal their kids using the oil of grace and love. In times of challenge and crisis, they come to you for wisdom, guidance and support. - They will seek healing or escape somewhere; have your past responses invited them to come to you? Do they meet judgment and anger - or forgiveness, healing and love? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kids seek healing from their parents. Challenges are the times when you will see what their hearts are made of.
<i>"Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life. And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents: BE good shepherds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kids: BE good sheep.

Parents and children both have responsibilities and choices to make – with more accountability on parents early on and more on the kids as they become adults.

Shepherding the Heart – “Can I change and grow?”

- *Water Exercise:* why did water come out of the cup when you were shaken?

Challenges, crises, failures and sins reveal a person’s heart and provide an opportunity for self-understanding and growth.

“The beautiful thing about the Christian message is that it is often through conflict, crisis, and even failure that the best lessons are learned.” (Kessler 122)

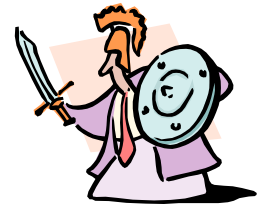
Guarantee **unconditional acceptance and love.**

- The essence of Christian Connecting (Larry Crabb) is to look beyond the filthy layers of sin and failure on the surface to the unreleased potential for good underneath. It is to **believe in someone** else no matter how far they have fallen or how badly they have hurt you. It is really to believe that God is good and that if He dwells in that person then good can come of any situation and the final product will be worth the wait.

Listen first: Seek first to understand... Get the problem on the table in front of you both; Don’t draw your sword in attack mode. Don’t accuse, judge or lecture...

Draw out the HEART... with questions.

- What was going on? (Describe the situation).
- What were you thinking and feeling? (Heart response).
- What did you do? (Active, behavioral response).
- Why did you do it? (Motives, goals, desires that shaped the action).
- What was the result? (How their response affected situation).



As kids get older, increasingly let the natural **consequences** teach, not you. Real life is the teacher, so you can be the supportive friend. Don’t be tempted to be the Rescue Hero parent, de-fusing the problem. [no dinner – no dessert (plus hunger); no oil change – no car; no P-slip – no trip]. Better to learn lessons of responsibility when the price tags are LOW!

“Teens whose parents bail them out every time they make bad judgments learn that bad decisions are really good ones because someone is always there to undo the consequences.” (Kessler 39).

Lead to **repentance** - **Model humility** that is willing to share your own struggles, temptations and failings - BE REAL. Don't accuse or judge; listen to the whole story and draw out the facts, motives, decisions and results.

- Consideration: What happened... questions.
- Confession: What choices did you make... let them confess; don't judge, accuse and force...
- Commitment: What will you do differently next time?
- Change: What will you do to start the change now?

"God makes no promise to forgive a sin that we will not forsake." Alan Redpath

Clarify the **two kinds of sorrow**:

- **Worldly sorrow** (like King Saul) is sorry about the consequences you have to endure because of your bad choices.
- **Godly sorrow** (like King David) recognizes the harm you have done to others and especially how you have offended God.

"Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death." 2 Corinthians 7:10

Lead to the Cross.

"If we confess our sins he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

"Sorry" is not enough. Just being sorry for your bad choices probably means you are sad that you have consequences to face because of your sins. We need to dig past this worldly sorrow, allowing time for the Holy Spirit to lead our kids to godly sorrow – true repentance.

Surface-repentance and shallow forgiveness is a parenting quick-fix but it doesn't get to the heart of the matter. Just as we can force surface compliance with certain behaviors through threats or bribes (fruit stapling) so we can enable false repentance that does not change the heart.

The GOSPEL is the power of God for salvation and transformation. Only when a sinner comes to the cross of Christ with true repentance and faith do we experience the life-changing power of God's forgiveness and grace. This is the opportunity we have with our kids every time they sin.

1. We can take the quick and easy path with an "it's ok" Bandaid or
2. We can give them time and space to really repent and come to the cross of Jesus.

Read 1 John 1:9 again. Notice the gospel does not end with forgiveness. It goes on to purification. God's promise is to make us holy. He is committed to making us PERFECT. C.S. Lewis pictures our lives as a house:

“He is building a quite different house from the one you thought of...
You thought you were going to be made into a decent little cottage:
but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.”

Mere Christianity, p. 174

We need to help our kids and teens deeply believe and apply the gospel – that Jesus not only forgives our sins (all of them, every time) but that He also cleanses us from unrighteousness (all of it, forever). The Holy Spirit is at work in every believer to wash out the bad stuff and fill us with good stuff. It doesn't happen overnight. And we have to cooperate with Him – “*Be filled with the Holy Spirit*” (Eph. 5:18). We won't be perfect until Jesus comes back but we will make progress!



Key Principle: Model, teach and talk about the gospel – come back over and over again to the limitless grace and power of Jesus!

Teach them to fish.

- When kids are small we have to “give them the fish” of insights into God's Word and the gospel.
- As they grow up we need to increasingly become coaches, equipping them to become self-feeders.
 - Developing their own patterns of Bible reading and prayer
 - Cultivating their own ways of celebrating Jesus and the gospel – journaling, song-writing, time alone / time w/ Christian friends, service, etc.



15
min.

Discussion Starter – How do you make the Bible and the gospel a regular part of your family life? How are you giving your kids “fish” right now? How are you teaching them to fish by equipping them to grow spiritually on their own? Share a recent teachable moment when you tried to shepherd the heart. Take a few minutes and pray for wisdom and grace in your homes.

May your child...

3. Become Godly – “Can I get my own way?”

Big Idea: At first we must control their behavior through discipline but gradually we must give our kids more control through choices – in the process, our kids will become wise, responsible and godly.

Objectives:

- Understand the balance between love and discipline.
- Desire self-motivated wisdom and godliness in their children (not total control).
- Choose an issue to address with their kids and discuss how to approach it.



“The goal of parenting is to work yourself out of a job.” (Age of Opportunity 192).

Discipline in the early years: Boundaries = freedom and happiness! (from *Dare to Discipline* - James Dobson)

1. **Developing respect for parents** is the critical factor in child management.
 - a. “Heredity does not equip a child with proper attitudes; children learn what they are taught.”
 - b. “Don’t mock the alligator until you’re across the stream” – a harsh, fear-inspiring parent might win obedience for a time, but will raise a rebel in the end.
2. The best opportunity to communicate often occurs *after* a disciplinary event.
 - a. “The parent’s demonstration of their authority builds respect like no other process, and the child will often reveal his affection after the initial tears have dried” (35).
3. Control without nagging (it is possible).
 - a. **Anger and volume do not produce results; ACTION motivates.**
 - i. Positive reinforcement: rewards (cash, points, praise)
 - ii. Negative reinforcement: punishment (hand slap, bottom spank)
4. Don’t saturate the child with materialism
 - a. Delayed gratification actually enhances enjoyment! “You actually cheat him of pleasure when you give him too much” (44). The danger of “over-loving and over-feeding” (47).
5. **Establish a balance between love and discipline**
 - a. Parents must be united – lest they assassinate the authority of the other (51).

“When you are defiantly challenged, win decisively. When the child asks, ‘Who’s in charge?’ Tell him. When he mutters, ‘Who loves me?’ take him in your arms and surround him with affection. Treat him with respect and dignity and expect the same from him. Then begin to enjoy the sweet benefits of competent parenting.” (51).

- b. 2 key messages: 1) I love you more than you can understand; 2) Because I love you, I must teach you to obey me in order to protect you.

- c. Spanking? Not before 15-18 months; mostly done by 6 yrs old, tapering off and gone by 10...

Let them Make Choices!

"I'm afraid that many of us are so busy making decisions for our children in order to keep them safe that we do not teach them to develop their own set of internalized biblical convictions." *Age of Opportunity* 128

- The "V of love" (*Parenting with Love and Logic* 75).

"The teenagers who make the wrong choice on alcohol are probably the same children who never learned how to keep their hands out of the cookie jar." (*Love and Logic* 23)

- Price Tags: pay me now or later.
- Thinking words not fighting words (b/c action motivates, not anger).

Parenting with Love and Logic

1. Parenting: Joy or Nightmare?

The supermarket ritual: "Frazzled, harried, and broken, Mom finally surrenders and buys off her precious flesh and blood with candy bars – a cease fire that guarantees enough peace to finish her rounds." (18).

- Win-win: parents win by relating well and establishing healthy control; kids win because they learn responsibility and learn to live in the real world.

2. Mission Possible: Raising Responsible Kids

"The teenagers who make the wrong choice on alcohol are probably the same children who never learned how to keep their hands out of the cookie jar." (23).

- The wrong way to show love:
 - Helicopter parents: always rescuing their kids from the consequences of their poor choices (late to school; forgotten papers; etc.)
 - Drill Sergeant parents: constantly telling their kids what to do, when and how – making them good.

"Unless we allow them to fail, sometimes grandiosely fail, we cannot allow our children to succeed." (26)

- Thoughtful risks: allow failures when the price tags are reasonable.
 - *You can pay me now, or you can pay me later:* repossessing a \$29 radio or a \$4900 car?
- To protect them is not to love them. "By the age of 12 kids should be able make most decisions without parental input." (30).

- Beware of your own parental need to be needed – don't you want to be *wanted*?

“Responsibility cannot be taught; it must be caught.” (32) – lectures don't cut it.

3. **Responsible Children Feel Good About Themselves**

- Kids learn best and are responsible when they feel good about themselves.
- Point out every weakness... or build on their strengths? It's all about our expectations.

“I don't become what you *think* I can, and I don't become what I think I can.
I become what I think you think I can.” (35).

- The three legged table of **self-concept**:
 - I am loved by the Magic people in my life – no strings, just the way I am. [We love you no matter what happens; not: “You better shape up...”]
 - I have the skills I need to make it. [“You're a great helper...” not: “Why do you always...?”]
 - It's all about **MODELING**: they're always watching what we do and how we do it – attitudes, behaviors, interactions, habits.
 - You can't enforce organization when your garage is trashed.
 - I am capable of taking control of my life. [George, I'll let you decide that for yourself. Not: “Don't go out without your coat, Tessa.”]

“When little kids rebel, parents can quash the rebellion with a stern order and get good short-term results. But when kids hit adolescence and rebel, parental orders become unenforceable.” (44).

4. **Children's Mistakes are Their Opportunities**

“Responsible behavior has a direct correlation to the number of decisions children are forced to make.” (48).

- Who *owns* the problem? Anger makes it our problem; Rescuing makes it our problem... then the kid forgets about it because it's not his anymore.
 - If it's a problem for us, it should be(come) a problem for them.
 - Empathize with their feelings, don't offer solutions: Listen, don't fix.
- Find a way to let the consequences teach the child.
 - Unless there is definite danger, long term consequences or they know we know they can't cope – if there's less than 10% chance of them solving it.
 - Force them to THINK, reach their own conclusions → see their own problems sooner.

5. Setting Limits Through Thinking Words

“The boundaries we set for our children are in reality the boundaries we set for ourselves. The more squishy and indecisive we are about our own boundaries, the more soggy and inconsistent we are about the limits we set for our toddlers.” (58).

- Kids need the security of safe limits (what they can and cannot do) – like a warm chair in a dark room with firm walls. [I can’t run out into the street, but when it comes to coins, *bon appetit*.]
- Limits lead to self-confidence: establish limits by offering choices you like.
- Ask questions and offer choices (instead of telling and lecturing all the time) → THINKING.

“Thinking words...place the responsibility for thinking and decision making on the children. They help kids do exactly what we want them to do – *think*. As much as possible.” (61)

• Thinking words vs. Fighting words:

- Fighting words (Do it now!) with threats may work with some kids for a time, but the usual response is resistance and resentment: passive-aggressive (more visibly) or passive-resistive (less visibly).
- Fighting words: a) We tell our kids what to do – “You get to work on that lawn right now!” b) We tell our kids what we will not allow – “You’re not going to talk to me that way!” c) We tell our kids what we *won’t* do for them – “I’m not letting you out of this house until you clean the living room.”
- Thinking words: A) What we will allow – “Feel free to join us for our next meal as soon as the lawn is mowed.” B) What we will do – “I’ll be glad to read you a story as soon as you’ve finished your bath.” C) What we will provide – “You may eat what is served, or you may wait and see if the next meal appeals to you more.”
- “It’s not fair.” But it is, because our choices make sense in the “real world.”
- Expect them to test the limits – but stick to them with compassion.

6. Gaining Control Through Choices

“We don’t feel like good parents unless we can run our kids around like little robots.” (71).

- In order to gain control, you must give some away: “We must give our children the control we don’t need to keep the control we do.”
- You can’t make your kid talk, think, learn, eat, sleep... You can’t win those battles.
 - Influence in these areas comes through MODELING – they will become like us.
 - Concentrate on fighting battles we know we can win – offer choices in these areas.
- The right dose of control: increasing freedom as adulthood approaches: the “V” of love – A toddler chooses mittens or gloves; a 6 year old chooses a

sport; a 12 year old chooses when to do homework; and a 17 year old chooses just about everything (See illus. On p. 75).

- Choices: a) force a child to think; b) give opp.s to make mistakes; c) avoid control battles; d) build their self-confidence.
 - Reminders and I-told-you-so's are put-downs.
 - Let the consequence do the teaching, not your words (they just cause anger).
 - Never give more than 2 choices, implying that if he doesn't decide, we'll decide for him.
 - Make sure both options are acceptable to you.
 - "You're welcome to ___ or ___." "Feel free to..." "Would you rather..."

7. **The Recipe for Success: Empathy with Consequences**

"The real world by and large doesn't operate on punishment... [but on consequences]." (89)

- The real world doesn't offer multiple warnings...
- Punishment builds resentment against the punisher - us.
- Consequences reveal the cause and the effect: "Who is making me hurt like this?" "Me."
- If no consequences come naturally, impose them: (1) enforceable, (2) fit the "crime", (3) firmly with love.
 - It's the empathy that counts → strengthen the relationship.
 - We're in your corner, we love you just the same.

8. **Lights, Camera, Parenting**

- Practice, Practice, Practice – Mentally rehearse the situation.

"The important thing is to build a relationship with our kids that will last a lifetime." (103).

Developing a Heart of Conviction and Wisdom (*Age of Opportunity*)

- Clear Boundary Issues – Scriptural teaching → submit to God's will.
 - Know Biblical commands; recognize preferences.
 - Predetermined, unchangeable, inflexible, bold, always lived out.
 - Examples: hitting, pushing, bad words, occult, cheating, sexual immorality, some movies, some music, some books, etc.
- Wisdom Issues – no direct Word from God → avoid legalism or foolishness (it's all good).
 - Know Biblical principles – "think of others," honor God, personal weaknesses and temptations, authority, grace, truth, "higher agenda," wise counsel, integrity, commitment, sovereignty, values, heart.
 - God's commands are a great symphony, don't hammer at one note.
 - Examples: sleepovers, b-day parties, some movies, some music, some books, etc.

“All of life is spiritual and Scripture speaks in some way to *every* situation in the human experience.” (130). “Do not think *for* our children, but teach *them* how to think about life.” (137).

- Parents must go there first! “You cannot give what you do not have.” (131).
- Strategies for developing a Wise Heart:

See problems as opportunities; Help them make decisions; Draw out their heart – don’t lecture; Be persistent; Distinguish between boundary and wisdom issues; Don’t share all of your wisdom in one conversation.



Key Principle: Win respect early through consistent discipline in a loving relationship.

- More control earlier → less need for control later = the transition from King to coach to friend.
- Within safe boundaries, shepherd the heart, don’t police behavior - so your child’s faith will become her own, not yours.
- Control what you can, not what you can’t. (stay in bed, not go to sleep).
- Let them choose; let natural consequences teach → wisdom (not frustration).
 - Action motivates, not anger



15
min.

Discussion Starter – What have been the most challenging issues in the behavior of your children? (Eat, sleep, friends, TV, movies, date, drive?)

How have you handled these issues? What worked well? What would you do differently? How have you tried to balance love and discipline? Do you apply the “V of love” in your home? How does it work with your kids?

Do you tend to use “thinking words” or “fighting words” more often? Which produce better results?

What are the “key phrases” you keep repeating in your house to reinforce key principles? (“Think of others,” “Be kind,” etc.).

May your child have a...

4. Vision to Change the world

Big Idea: Parents must prepare to launch their kids out with a passion and vision to change the world.

Objectives:



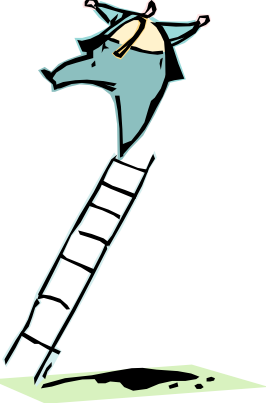
- Recognize our call to redeem the world as salt and light, not withdraw from it or assimilate into it.
- Get excited to see their kids make a difference through their unique calling (like a flaming arrow).
- Discuss how to address cultural influences and begin to impact the world as a family.

Realities of Culture:

Culture: “the spiritual air that our hearts constantly absorb.” (147).

- Pollution: we must protect our children from the poison in our cultural air by giving them spiritual filters against those poisons. [Innoculations]. Defines and Shapes our relationships – roles, gender, family. Spiritual life - ...isms. Pace of life – time, etc. Agenda for life – values, what’s important, true?
- Relativism, individualism, emotionalism, presentism, materialism, autonomy, victimism.
- The goal: avoid corruption by negative influences – and begin to BE a positive influence in the world – salt and light. Respond to Influences wisely, alertly and redemptively:



<p><u>Rejection</u> of the world “Come out from them and be separate.” Is. 52:11</p>	<p><u>Redemption</u> of the world “You are the salt of the earth... you are the light of the world.” Matt. 5:13,14</p>	<p><u>Assimilation</u> into the world “I have become all things to all men...” 1 Cor. 9:22</p>
		
<p>Evil is in the thing, so avoid the thing ☹ - God’s creation is all</p>	<p><u>Goal 4 - Our kids become world-changers.</u> With a passion and vision to change the world.</p>	<p>“Be in the world but not of it.” No compromise.</p>

<p>good! The evil is <i>within!</i> Avoidance is not the cure; Danger: self-righteous legalism – THE LIST. Blame the vehicle (music, movies, TV, etc.). <u>Clear Boundary</u> <u>Issues:</u> [porn, cult, injury, drunkenness – direct violations of God’s Word]. <u>Wisdom Issues:</u> no clear teaching of Scripture – curfew, parties, movies, music, TV, etc. Learn principles and follow the Spirit!</p>	<p>“We are interested in doing more than protecting them; we want them to influence the culture redemptively and in so doing bring glory to God.” (163). Prepare: Teach a Biblical worldview and Biblical principles for living in the world. Model: You must live it to teach it. Test: evaluate, interpret and analyze with them. Identify common ground: even with offensive material (Harry Potter). Decide: when to engage, when to separate. Redeem: rebuild culture God’s way. No fear.</p>	<p>Nothing is ever neutral – everything is either used for good or evil. “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world...” Rom. 12:2 Talk to your kids about culture: proactively, lovingly expose kids’ faulty thinking, share your own struggle, point to Christ, model His character.</p>
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The concept of Redemption in *Robin Hood*: “But they’ll rob our homes and our fields...” “Then by God, we take it back!” This world is occupied by enemy forces and our mission is to defeat them in God’s power on every possible front. The stakes are high: eternal human souls. But our weapons are powerful and our Commander has already won the victory for us with His own blood. We have only to claim it and invite as many as possible to do the same.

1. Teach Christian Worldview 101:

- How do we know God? [Creation = General Revelation; Bible = Special Revelation; + faith]
- What is true? [The Bible as our authoritative foundation – our straight line: inspired + inerrant].
- What is God like? [Trinity; holiness, justice, love, goodness, omni’s – sovereign, almighty].
- Creation: The world was created good – perfect, in Eden. Why? Glorify God!
- Sin: The world is polluted by sin, suffering and death because of the Fall (Adam & Eve’s decision to disobey God). The problem of evil, etc.
- Christ: (a) Incarnation – fully God; fully man. (b) Atonement: redeems (buys back) people from sin and death when they believe in his sacrificial death and receive him as Savior and Lord. To redeem (*exagorazo*) means "to buy out of slavery" by paying a price. Christ paid this price by dying (cf. [1 Peter 1:18, 19](#);

[Acts 20:28](#)). The Exodus. (c) Resurrection: confirmation of his claims, firstfruits of our future, ascension. (d) Return: personal, imminent.

- Salvation: by grace alone, through faith alone – justification, adoption – sovereignty + responsibility (choice).
- Holy Spirit: the 3rd person, completing the work of Christ in his church, confirms revelations in our hearts.
- The Church: descriptions – body, bride, gathering, temple. United, holy (saints). Mission: Love God, Love each other, Make disciples. Sacraments: teaching, prayer, baptism, Lord’s Supper,
 - *Our mission* as followers of Christ is to be salt in the world – preserving and enhancing the goodness; and
 - *Our mission* is to be light for the world – revealing the bad news of sin and the good news of salvation in Christ.
- The End Times: death, heaven, hell, millennium, Christ’s Return (pre-post trib?), body resurrection.

2. Discuss Life: [Formal, intentional and informal, teachable moments]. Modeling & Rel’ship.

Formally – what is your school teaching you about sex? What about drugs?

Informally – respond to assignments and class issues; friends and recreation choices, etc.

- How do certain situations, classes, shows, movies, etc. affect GOD? [please, displease?] How do you know? [ahhh. The Bible...]
- How do those situations, classes, shows, movies, etc. affect YOU?
- How does your participation in those activities affect OTHERS?

3. Serve Together: find a ministry in which some or all of you can make a difference in the world.

For Further Reflection:

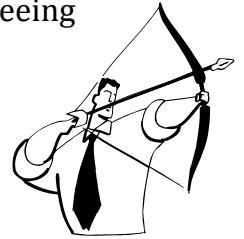
- How has our culture already influenced your children? How have you dealt with those influences?
- How have you tried to protect your children from other negative messages?
- How have you or could you begin to develop a world-changing vision in your kids?

4. Prepare to Launch: the goal of child-raising is to let 'em fly.

- What is your passion? What motivates and inspires you? What has God filled you with desire to accomplish? What would motivate you to get out of bed every morning?
- What is your vision? Where do you see yourself in 5, 10, 20 years? What could God do in and through you? Think bigger. Change the world!



“Grieve not then, if your sons seem to desert you, but rejoice, rather, seeing the will of God done gladly. Remember how the Psalmist described children? He said that they were as an heritage from the Lord, and that every man should be happy who had his quiver full of them. And what is a quiver full of but arrows? And what are arrows for but to shoot? So, with the strong arms of prayer, draw the bowstring back and let the arrows fly – all of them, straight at the Enemy’s hosts.”



(Jim Elliot – *In the Shadow of the Almighty*, 132).



Key Principle: Prepare to launch – work every day to show your kids what a world-changing believer looks like and help them become one

- Model, teach and talk (Deut. 6) –
- Focus on the Bible and the Gospel and therefore the mission and values of God
- Reinforce values in life situations (Teachable Moments)
- Pray “your kingdom come, your will be done”