

PRINCIPLES FOR BIBLICAL PARENTING

Resources

Lesson 2

We have briefly examined the foundation of Biblical Parenting. We have learned that you must be saved if you are ever going to hope to raise up godly children, that you must have goals to strive for in your child's life, that both you and your child are sinners and that God has placed parents in authority over their children and the children in subjection to the parent, that both the parent and the child need to submit to the same moral standard, and finally, that you must be committed to hard work. Parenting is no easy task! It is difficult on several fronts. First, it requires the parents themselves to diligently study and model God's truth. Secondly, it requires diligently evangelizing, training and discipling one's children. Finally, the task of parenting is made very complex because each child is different. Each child has strengths, weaknesses, and personality traits that make the task of parenting unique for each child. This makes parenting both an art and a science. The biblical principles as a science are fixed but the application of those principles is an art. John MacArthur has written:

If we measure our success as parents solely by what our children become, there is no inviolable guarantee in Scripture that we will experience absolute success on those terms. Sometimes children raised in fine Christian families grow up to abandon the faith. On the other hand, the Lord graciously redeems many children whose parents are utter failures. The outcome of the child, as a factor taken by itself, is no reliable gauge of the parents' success. However, the true measure of success for Christian parents is the parents' own character. To the degree that we have followed God's design for parenting, we have succeeded as parents before God.¹

For this lesson we want to examine some of the resources that you, as a Christian parent, have at your disposal. These resources, like tools, help us to raise children up in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

I. THE WORD OF GOD

- A. The most powerful resource you have as a parent is the Word of God. The Word of God is energized by the Holy Spirit and it alone has the power to save children and transform their lives. With all the resources on parenting available today, Christian parents must understand why God's Word is different from any other resource. One of the dangers of going to secular sources to teach us about parenting is that the world does not believe in the authority, sufficiency, and life changing power of the Word of God. Because of this, they ignore the most important resource the parent has to work with – the Bible. Even "Christian Psychologists," though they may claim to believe in the Bible, often verbally or in practice deny that the Bible is sufficient to raise up children. This usually leads to an eclectic approach to parenting where worldly wisdom is merged with divine truth. The result is that unbiblical parenting techniques lead to ungodly behavior. Ryle has said:

¹John MacArthur, *Successful Christian Parenting*, pg. 17.

A thorough knowledge of the Bible is the foundation of all clear views of religion. He that is well grounded in it will not generally be found a waverer, and carried about by every wind of doctrine. Any system of training which does not make a knowledge of the Scripture the first thing is unsafe and unsound.²

B. Why God's Word is Your Best Resource

1. Psa. 19:7-14 The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. 8The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. 9The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether. 10They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. 11Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward. 12Who can discern *his* errors? Acquit me of hidden *faults*. 13Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous *sins*; Let them not rule over me; Then I will be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of great transgression. 14Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer.
 - a) What does this Scripture tell us about the Word of God?

2. Psa. 119:9-11 How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping *it* according to Your word. 10With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments. 11Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.
 - a) What does this Scripture tell us about the Word of God?

3. Isa. 55:11 So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding *in the matter* for which I sent it.
 - a) What does this Scripture tell us about the Word of God?

4. Jer. 23:29 "Is not My word like fire?" declares the Lord, "and like a hammer which shatters a rock?"
 - a) What does this Scripture tell us about the Word of God?

² J. C. Ryle, *Duties to Parents*, pg. 10

5. Jn. 17:17 “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.”
- a) What does this Scripture tell us about the Word of God?
6. I Thess. 2:13 For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not as the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.
- a) What does this Scripture tell us about the Word of God?
7. Heb. 4:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
- a) What does this Scripture tell us about the Word of God?
8. I Pet. 1:23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God.
- a) What does this Scripture tell us about the Word of God?
9. I Pet. 2:1-3 Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, ²like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, ³if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.
- a) What does this Scripture tell us about the Word of God?

C. **In your own words, how would you summarize what all the texts above teach us about the Word of God and how and why the Word of God should be used in parenting?**

D. **What are some general ways you can train your child up to know, understand, and obey the Bible?**

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is there to help you be a good Christian parent. The Holy Spirit works through the Word of God, never contrary to it, empowering parents who know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior, bringing conviction upon unbelieving children, and working through the word to transform children who have repented of their sins and placed their faith in Jesus Christ.

A. The Holy Spirit helps Christian parents and children.

1. Rom. 8:12-14 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— 13for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.
 - a) What does this Scripture tell us about the Holy Spirit and believers?

2. Rom. 8:26-27 In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words; 27and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*.
 - a) What does this Scripture tell us about the Holy Spirit and believers?

3. Gal. 5:16-23 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. 18But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. 19Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
 - a) What does this Scripture tell us about the Holy Spirit and believers?

4. Eph. 3:16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,
 - a) What does this Scripture tell us about the Holy Spirit and believers?

5. I Jn. 2:27 As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

a) What does this Scripture tell us about the Holy Spirit and believers?

B. In your own words, summarize the significance of the Holy Spirit both in your life as a believer and in the life of your believing child.

C. The Holy Spirit helps in the life of your unbelieving child.

You cannot make your children love the Bible, I allow. None but the Holy Ghost can give us a heart to delight in the Word. But you can make your children acquainted with the Bible; and be sure they cannot be acquainted with that blessed book too soon, or too well.³

1. Zech. 12:10 "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.

a) What does this Scripture tell us about the Holy Spirit in relation to unbelievers?

2. Jn. 3:5-8 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6" That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7" Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8" The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going ; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

a) What does this Scripture tell us about the Holy Spirit in relation to unbelievers?

³ J. C. Ryle, *Duties to Parents*, pg. 9

3. Jn. 16:7-8 "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. 8" And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.

a) What does this Scripture tell us about the Holy Spirit in relation to unbelievers?

4. Acts 16:14 A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

a) What does this Scripture tell us about the Holy Spirit in relation to unbelievers?

D. In your own words, summarize what the verses above teach us about the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of believing parents and children.

E. In your own words, summarize what the verses above teach us about the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of an unbelieving child.

III. PRAYER

The Christian parent is a parent who prays for their children. Prayer is the Christian parent's daily, hourly, and sometimes moment by moment plea for help. We need help and God is there to help us when we ask. Prayer, which is acceptable to God, comes from a needy and humble heart, asking assistance from the God of unlimited resources. The Christian parent prays that God's will might be accomplished both in their life as a parent and in their children's lives. Remember that prayer is the means by which God gives us what He wants.

A. Pray continually

1. Eph. 6:18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,
2. Col. 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving;
3. Phil. 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

4. I Thess. 5:17 pray without ceasing;
 - a) According to the Scriptures above, what part should prayer play in the life of every Christian parent?
 - b) What are some general ways you can implement prayer on behalf of yourself as a parent and your child?

B. Pray according to God's will

1. Mt. 6:9-13 " Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 10' Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. 11' Give us this day our daily bread. 12'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]"
2. I Jn. 5:14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.
 - a) What do the verses above teach us about praying according to the will of God?
 - b) How do we know something is according to the will of God?
 - c) What if we don't know for certain if something is the will of God, how then should we pray?

C. Pray for wisdom

1. Prov. 2:1-8 My son, if you will receive my words And treasure my commandments within you, 2Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; 3For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; 4If you seek her as silver And search for her as for hidden treasures; 5Then you will discern the fear of the Lord And discover the knowledge of God. 6For the Lord gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding. 7He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity, 8Guarding the paths of justice, And He preserves the way of His godly ones.

2. James 1:5-8 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. 7For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.
 - a) What do the verses above teach us about how wisdom relates to prayer?
 - b) What is wisdom and in what areas of parenting is wisdom important?
 - c) What do the verses above teach us is the source of wisdom?

D. Pray in obedience and with confidence

1. Psa. 66:18 If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear;
2. Prov. 15:8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, But the prayer of the upright is His delight.
3. I Jn. 3:21-22 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; 22and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.
 - a) What do the verses above teach us about sin and it's effect on God answering our prayers?
 - b) If you have sin in your life, what should you do before coming to God in prayer?

Parents, if you love your children, do all that lies in your power to train them up to a habit of prayer. Show them how to begin. Tell them what to say. Encourage them to persevere. Remind them if they become careless or slack about it. Let it not be your fault, at any rate, if they never call on the name of the Lord. . . Believe me, if you never hear your children pray yourself, you are much to blame. You are little wiser than the bird described in Job, "which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in the dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them. She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers: her labor is in vain without fear" (Job. 39:14-16).⁴

⁴ J. C. Ryle, *Duties to Parents*, pg. 13-14.

IV. EXAMPLE

Your example as a Christian, as a parent, as a husband or wife, goes far in training your children. Example is a silent but powerful tool that exposes the real us to our children. You can tell your children they need to pray but if you don't pray, they probably never will either. You can teach them how to be honest, but if they see you are dishonest, it will undermine and erode everything you say with your lips. Example is the quiet hammer which will drive truth deep into the heart of your child.

A. Following the example of others

1. I Cor. 4:16 Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me.
2. I Cor. 11:1 Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.
3. Phil. 3:17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.
4. Heb. 13:7 Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.
 - a) What do the Scriptures above teach us about the importance of learning from the example of other people?
 - b) What are some general areas you might use to train your children from the example of others?

B. Being an example for your children

Love is the grand secret of successful training. Anger and harshness may frighten, but they will not persuade the child that you are right; and if he sees you often out of temper, you will soon cease to have his respect. A father who speaks to his son as Saul did to Jonathan (1 Sam. 20:30), need not expect to retain his influence over that son's mind.⁵

1. I Tim. 4:12 Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but *rather* in speech, conduct, love, faith *and* purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.
2. Tit. 2:7 in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, *with* purity in doctrine, dignified,
 - a) In what areas do the verses above teach us to be an example?

⁵J.C. Ryle, *Duties to Parents*, pg. 6.

- b) Are you an example in your personal walk with the Lord?
- c) Are you an example in your marriage?
- d) Are you an example in your business dealings?
- e) Are you an example in your relationship to others?
- f) Are you an example in your relationship to the governing authorities?
- g) Are you an example in your relationship to the church?

V. GET ADVICE FROM OTHER GODLY SUCCESSFUL PARENTS

- A. Prov. 11:14 Where there is no guidance the people fall, But in abundance of counselors there is victory.
- B. Prov. 12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel.
- C. Prov. 15:22 Without consultation, plans are frustrated, But with many counselors they succeed.
- D. Prov. 20:18 Prepare plans by consultation, And make war by wise guidance.
- E. Prov. 24:6 For by wise guidance you will wage war, And in abundance of counselors there is victory.

1. What do the verses above teach you about the importance of getting wise, biblical counsel?
2. What kind of people do you think it would not be wise to get counsel from?
3. What kind of people do you think it would be wise to get counsel from?
4. What are some ways you might use in order to get wise counsel from others?

VI. READ GOOD MATERIALS ON PARENTING AND TRAINING CHILDREN

- A. There are so many books on the market telling parents the best way to raise their children, but what philosophies and methodologies should be rejected?
- B. I think it would be fair to say that almost any book on parenting might have some truth to it, but how do you know something is good or bad?
- C. What specifically should be warning signs that a particular book is not a good book on parenting?
- D. What specifically would you see in a good book on parenting?
- E. How might you increase your chances of finding good books and materials for parenting?

VII. OBJECT LESSONS FROM LIFE AND CREATION

- A. Prov. 19:1-2 The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. 2Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge.

- B. Rom. 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.
1. What do the two verses above teach us about God's creation?
 2. What are some of the advantages of using God's creation and our surroundings to teach biblical truth?
- C. **Examine the teaching style of Jesus in the sections below from the sermon on the mount. Take note of how Jesus made truth clear to his hearers.**
1. Mt. 5:13-15 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty *again*? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men . 14" You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; 15nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. "
 2. Mt. 6:25-30 "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, *as to* what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, *as to* what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26" Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and *yet* your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? 27" And who of you by being worried can add a *single* hour to his life? 28" And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, 29yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. 30" But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is *alive* today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, *will He* not much more *clothe* you? You of little faith!"
 3. Mt. 7:15-20 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16" You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn *bushes* nor figs from thistles, are they? 17" So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18" A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19" Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20" So then, you will know them by their fruits."
 4. Mt. 7:24-27 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25" And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and *yet* it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. 26" Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27" The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall."
- a) What do the examples above, taken from the sermon on the mount, teach us about using God's creation and life situations as teaching tools?
 - b) Why do you think Jesus taught this way?