

# PRINCIPLES FOR BIBLICAL PARENTING

## Critical Things To Remember And Apply

### Lesson 3

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Like all the spiritual disciplines, parenting can become routine, stale, mechanical, and we can lose our purpose and focus. You may study parenting, you may have a plan, and you may begin to execute the plan and though your methods and goals may be very good, your heart may not be in it. It is easy to merely go through the motions of parenting and not really think about what you are doing and why you are doing it. Why am I a parent? , is a question that needs to be regularly asked and answered. If you don't force yourself to remember certain critical things about parenting, you can quickly forget what you are trying to accomplish. Parenting is not some necessary duty that you have to perform until your children grow up so you can get back to doing what you want to do. Parenting is a spiritual discipline that gives parents an opportunity to glorify God, be a blessing to your children, and be a blessing to their own lives as well.

## I. PARENT FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

### A. Remember That Christian Parents Do Everything for the Glory of God<sup>1</sup>

1. Psa. 115:1 Not to us, O Lord, not to us, But to Your name give glory Because of Your lovingkindness, because of Your truth.
  - a. Who does this verse tell us not to give glory to?
  - b. According to this verse, who is and isn't to receive glory?
  - c. How might this text apply to parenting?
  
2. Isa. 42:8 I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images.
  - a. What does this verse tell us about God's passion for His glory?
  - b. How does this verse relate to parenting?

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<sup>1</sup> See following texts for a sampling of additional references on giving glory to God: Josh. 7:19; I Sam. 6:5; II Chron. 5:13; Isa. 24:15-16; Isa. 42:12; Jer. 13:16; Lk. 2:14; Rom. 15:9; I Cor. 6:20; II Cor. 9:13; I Pet. 4:16; Rev. 4:9; 19:7.

3. I Cor. 10:31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
  - a. What does this text tell us about the scope of giving glory to God?
  - b. In what areas are we to give glory to God in our parenting?
  
4. Col. 3:17-24 (note following context vss. 18-22) Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. 18Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them. 20Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. 21Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart. 22Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. 23Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, 24knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.
  - a. What do **vss. 17** and **23** tell us to do?
  - b. What five relationships are mentioned in between **vss. 17-23**? How does each relationship relate to giving glory to God with thanksgiving? And how do each of these relationships relate to parenting?
    - (1)
    - (2)
    - (3)
    - (4)
    - (5)

- c. What do vss. 23-24 tell us is not a proper motivation, focus, or goal in our parenting?
  
  - d. What would cause us to lose our proper focus?
  
  - e. What are some examples of an improper focus?
5. I Pet. 4:11 Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.
- a. What two general categories of actions are mentioned in this verse?
    - (1)
    - (2)
  
  - b. What must be our driving motive in doing all things, including parenting?
6. How would you summarize the verses above in relation to what they teach us about parenting?
7. If we fail to parent for the glory of God, then what motivation is driving our parenting?
8. What are some practical ways you can keep the proper focus of parenting fresh in your mind so you will not forget why you are a parent?

**B. Remember That It Glorifies God When You, as a Parent, Obey the Lord**

1. Mt. 12:50 For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven , he is My brother and sister and mother.
2. Jn. 14:15 If you love Me, you will keep My com mandments.
3. Jn. 14:21 He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.
4. Jn. 15:14 You are My friends if you do what I command you.
5. I Jn. 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.
6. What do the above verses teach us about how parents are to glorify God?
7. What relationship does loving God have with obeying God in your parenting?
8. Is it possible to show love to God without obeying Him?
9. Is it possible to show love to your child if you are modeling disobedience to God?

**C. Remember That It Blesses the Lord, Blesses You And Blesses Your Child When They Obey**

1. Deut. 21:18-21 If any man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father or his mother, and when they chastise him, he will not even listen to them, 19then his father and mother shall seize him, and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gateway of his hometown. 20 They shall say to the elders of his city, This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey us, he is a glutton and a drunkard. 21 Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death; so you shall remove the evil from your midst, and all Israel will hear of it and fear. <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The death penalty for rebellious children is also given in Ex. 21:17 and Lev. 20:9. Jesus quoted these texts to the pharisees in Mt. 15:4-6.

- a. What kind of child does this verse address?
- b. What is the parent's first course of action?
- c. What happens if the first course of action does not yield results? What were the parents supposed to do?
- d. What reason does the text give for dealing with rebellious children?
- e. What does this text teach us about God's estimation of rebellious children?
- f. We are not under the same law system as the people of Israel, yet we can still apply the principles of this text. What principles can you take away from this text in the areas listed below:
  - (1) God's view of rebellious children
  - (2) Parent's responsibility
  - (3) Child's responsibility

2. Eph. 6:1-3 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), 3 so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.

- a. We hear a lot today about children's rights. What does this verse teach us is a child's right before their parents and God?
- b. What does this verse promise for children who honor their father and mother?<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> This verse quotes the fifth commandment and several other commandments in the law which require children to honor their parents (see Ex. 20:17; Lev. 19:3; Deut. 27:16).

3. Col. 3:20 Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.
  - a. In what areas does this verse teach us children are to obey?
  - b. What is God's estimation of an obedient child?

## II. REMEMBER TO AIM FOR THE HEART, NOT THE BEHAVIOR

Parents can become moralists. In our desire to raise up well behaved children who give glory to God, we can actually train them to become little pharisees if we do not deal with their hearts. The moralist is a person who does what is right on the outside. This was the problem with the Pharisees of Jesus day, they did what was right on the outside, yet nothing they did pleased God. Why? Because their heart motives were not right before God. We can do all the external things and still be in rebellion to God, but we cannot have a right heart before the Lord and not do those things that are pleasing to Him. Your job as a parent is not to merely create pharisees who do the right thing on the outside. Your job as a parent is to train your child's heart to want to do right out of devotion to God.

### A. Life Flows from the Heart

*Parents often get side tracked with behavior. If your goal in discipline is changed behavior, it is easy to understand why this happens. The thing that alerts you to your child's need for correction is his behavior. Behavior irritates and thus calls attention to itself. Behavior becomes your focus. You think you have corrected when you have changed unacceptable behavior to behavior you have sanctioned and appreciate.*

*What is the problem? you ask. The problem is this: Your child's needs are far more profound than his aberrant behavior. Remember, his behavior does not just spring forth uncaused. His behavior the things he says and does reflects his heart. If you are to really help him, you must be concerned with the attitudes of heart that drive his behavior.*

*A change in behavior that does not stem from a change in heart is not commendable; it is condemnable.<sup>4</sup>*

1. Psa. 24:3-5 Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place? <sup>4</sup>He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood And has not sworn deceitfully. <sup>5</sup>He shall receive a blessing from the Lord And righteousness from the God of his salvation.

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<sup>4</sup> Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding A Child's Heart*, pg. 4-5.

- a. What kind of person is able to have a close relationship with God according to this text?
  - (1)
  - (2)
  - (3)
  - (4)
- b. What is the outcome of doing these things?
- c. Since these things are true, what should a parent strive for in the life of their child?

2. Prov. 4:23 Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.

- a. What does the term heart most frequently refer to in the Scriptures?
- b. What does this verse tell us we are to do with our heart and how do we go about obeying this command?
- c. What reason does this verse give us for guarding our heart?
- d. How does this verse relate to you as a parent?
- e. What is wrong with merely forcing your child to obey but not addressing their heart?

f. What is the outcome of a well trained heart?

*A good piece of ground bears not only a fore-crop but an after crop. He who is godly does not only bear God a good crop of obedience himself while he lives, but by training his child in the principles of religion, he bears God an after-crop when he is dead.*<sup>5</sup>

3. Mk. 7:20-23 And He was saying, That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. 21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, 22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. 23 All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.
- a. According to this text, what is the driving force behind our actions?
- b. When you force a child to obey externally, but do not address the source of their sin, what is the eventual outcome?

**B. Examples of Heartless Obedience**

*Civility is but nature refined; there is nothing of Christ there, and the heart may be foul and impure. Under these fair leaves of civility the worm of unbelief may be hid. A moral person has a secret antipathy against grace: he hates vice and he hates grace as much as vice. The snake has a fine color, but a sting. A person adorned and cultivated with moral virtue has a secret spleen against sanctity. The Stoics who were the chief of the moralized heathens, were the bitterest enemies Paul had (Acts 17:18).*<sup>6</sup>

1. Micah 6:6-7 With what shall I come to the Lord And bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, With yearling calves? 7 Does the Lord take delight in thousands of rams, In ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
2. Mt. 7:21-23 Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 Many will say to Me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles 23 And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas Watson, *The Godly Man's Picture*, pg. 187.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Watson, *A Body of Divinity*, pg. 243.



3. Mk. 7:6-8 And He said to them , Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. 7 But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men. 8 Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.
  
4. Mt. 23:23 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.
  - a. How would you summarize what these texts teach us about getting our children to obey but not addressing their heart?
  
  - b. How do you think behavior motivated parenting relates to the categories below?
    - (1) A child grows up and as soon as they leave home plunge themselves into sin and rebellion.
  
    - (2) A child reluctantly does what their parents say and as soon as they leave home go apostate and walk away from the Lord all together.
  
    - (3) A child grows up, leaves home, continues to go to church but never seems to grow spiritually, never seems to enjoy practicing the godly disciplines, remains in a perpetual state of mediocrity.

**C. Examples of True Acceptable Obedience**

1. Micah 6:8 He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?
  
2. 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 these verses teach us about the kind of behavior that is pleasing to God?

- b. What is the difference between hearing these words of mine and acting upon them (Mt. 7:24) and the near preceding context where the people did many good deeds in Jesus name (Mt. 7:22) but were cast into hell (Mt. 7:23)?

**D. What God Considers To Be Acceptable Obedience**

- 1. Psa. 51:16-17 For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. 17The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.
- 2. I Sam. 15:22-23 Samuel said, Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king.
- 3. Prov. 21:27 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination, How much more when he brings it with evil intent!
- 4. Amos 6:6 For I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, And in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.
  - a. What do all of these verses emphasize?
  - b. In your own words how would you summarize what these verses teach us about acceptable obedience to God?
  - c. How could the principles from these verses be applied to parenting?

**E. What Obedience Is Not**

*Parents, determine to make your children obey you, though it may cost you much trouble, and cost them many tears. Let there be no questioning, and reasoning, and disputing, and delaying, and answering again. When you give them a command, let them see plainly that you will have it done.<sup>7</sup>*

- 1. Obedience is not merely doing the right thing.

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<sup>7</sup>J. C. Ryle, *Duties to Parents*, pg. 19.

2. Obedience is not partially doing what is right.

*It is fitting that the child should obey the parent in all just and sober commands. God's laws are like the curtains of the tabernacle which were looped together. They are like a chain of gold where all the links are coupled. A conscientious man will not willingly break one link of this chain. If one command is violated, the whole chain is broken: whosoever shall keep the whole law, yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all (Jas. 2:10).<sup>8</sup>*

3. Obedience is not delaying to do what is right.
4. Obedience is not doing what is right but grudgingly.
5. Obedience is not doing what is right while harboring unconfessed sin in your heart.
6. Obedience does not modify the command.

#### **F. What Obedience Is**

*A gracious heart is like a piece of good ground that, having received the seed of mercy, produces a crop of obedience.<sup>9</sup>*

1. Obedience is doing what is right according to the Word of God from a heart that desires to please and glorify the Lord.
2. Obedience is to do all that is required.
3. Obedience does not delay but quickly does what is right.
4. Obedience is doing what is right with a joyful heart.
5. Obedience does what is right from a heart that has its sins confessed.
6. Obedience does just what is asked exactly as it is asked.

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<sup>8</sup>Thomas Watson, *The Godly Man's Picture*, pg. 167.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Watson, *The Godly Man's Picture*, pg. 133.