

Sunday, October 8, 2017

Chapter 4: Inability & Chapter 5: Identity

**Chapter 4: Inability Principle:** Recognizing what you are unable to do is essential to good parenting.

1. Discuss at your tables: What's wrong with the following statements?
  - A. "If it's the last thing I do, I'll get my children to believe!"
  - B. "I will discipline the hell out of my children."
  - C. "It's my job to ensure that they do what's right.."
  - D. "If I do nothing else, I will send children out into the world who are prepared to live right."
  - E. "After I'm done with him, he'll never even think of doing that again."
2. "Parents, here's what you need to understand: God has given you authority for the work of change, but has not granted you the power to make that change happen." (Tripp, 61)
3. "You can scare or reward your children into temporary change." (Tripp, 61)
4. "Let me say it this way: the behavior of your children is symptomatic of what is going on inside your children. Inside change always precedes lasting outside change." (Tripp, 61)
5. "if as a parent you think that you have power that you don't have, you will do things that you should not do and you will fail to do the things that are vital to do." (Tripp, 61)
- Your parenting will tend to be:
  - A. \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. \_\_\_\_\_
  - D. \_\_\_\_\_
  - E. \_\_\_\_\_
6. "In this form of parenting, it is all about you and your children, rather than you being an agent of what only God can do in your children." (Tripp, 62)

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7. Discuss at your tables: Do your children need your authority?  
Why or why not?

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8. "Representing the God who gives us grace for change means looking for daily opportunities to communicate that grace, helping our children to see how they need that grace, and modeling that grace in the way we speak and act toward our children." (Tripp, 63)

Journal: Think of one specific situation you can "represent God's grace" to your child[ren] this week:

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9. What this doesn't mean:

- A.-----
- B.-----
- C.-----
- D.-----

10. Most often used tools of parental power:

A. **Fear:** "The power we buy into here is to issue a big enough threat that creates a big enough fear to change our kids."

This change is -----

B. **Reward:** Read Josh's story on the following page:

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*Josh is eleven years old and is not getting along very well with his seven-year-old sister, Mary. Mary is often left crying after one of her encounters with her older brother. Josh's parents have become increasingly frustrated and discouraged because this has become a daily occurrence. So Josh's dad comes to him and says, "Josh, you know that little drone that you've been looking at on the Internet? Well, the drone can be yours. All you have to do is get along with Mary for one month, just four short weeks, and that drone will be yours."*

*Josh then has the most loving, altruistic, patient, and kind four weeks he has ever had with Mary. Josh's mom and dad are amazed that for a whole month Mary hasn't cried once. They are basking in their parental wisdom and success. So Josh's dad orders the drone and even pays for rush delivery. The drone arrives, and Josh and his dad assemble it together. They give it a little test drive in the backyard and fifteen minutes later they hear Mary crying as Josh is chasing her around the back yard with his little drone.*

**Discuss at your table: What happened?!?**

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The change is \_\_\_\_\_

C. **Shame:** "After all I've done for you, and this is the way you're going to treat me."

The change is \_\_\_\_\_

12. **God doesn't need to control:** "The lack of communication, closeness, and affection that exists between parents and their older children is often the sad legacy of the ways we tried to control our kids. Our heavenly Father is never content with just controlling us. Control is no problem for him; he's sovereign after all." (Tripp, 69)

13. "Good parenting lives at the intersection of a humble admission of personal powerlessness and confident rest in the power and grace of God." (Tripp, 69)

**Journal questions:**

A. How/when is your parenting driven by worry? How does this worry cause you to do or say things you shouldn't do or say?

B. How can you find confident rest in God's grace this week?

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## Parenting: 14 Gospel principles that can radically change your family.

**Chapter 5: Identity principle:** If you are not resting as a parent in your identity in Christ, you will look for identity in your children.

1. "There are only two places for you and me to look for identity. One place to look is vertically, getting our identity and the direction and assessment of potential from God—from his love and acceptance, his forgiving grace, his constant presence, his power and his promises, and the glory of all these that he's showered down on us." (Tripp, 76)
2. **The Sally Example:** "Sally was committed to her dream of lavishly successful children, so not only was she driven and unrelenting, but she drove them too."

**Table discussion:** Try to put yourself in Sally's shoes and discuss at your table:  
"What is going on with Sally or any parent when they drive a child to mental, physical and emotional exhaustion?"

3. "There are only two places for you and me to look for identity. One place to look is vertically, getting our identity and the direction and assessment of potential from God—from his love and acceptance, his forgiving grace, his constant presence, his power and his promises, and the glory of all these that he's showered down on us." (Tripp, 76)

4. "If you are not resting in your vertical identity, you will look horizontally, searching to find yourself and your reason for living in something in the creation.... The problem with this is that created things were never designed to give you identity." (Tripp, 76)

5. Three things to say about trying to get your identity from your children:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

6. "It just never works to ask your children to be your own personal saviors. This is a burden they will never bear well, and it will introduce trouble and struggle into your relationship with them. Jesus is your life, and this frees you and your children from the burden of asking them to give you what your Savior has already given you." (Tripp, 79)

7. Signs your parenting is driven by what you need from your children rather than by what God wants to do through your children:

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_

D. \_\_\_\_\_

E. \_\_\_\_\_