

## Your Kids Matter to God!

- **God's *view* of children**

*<sup>3</sup>Behold, children are a gift of the LORD; The fruit of the womb is a reward. <sup>4</sup>Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. <sup>5</sup>How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; They shall not be ashamed, when they speak with their enemies in the gate.*

Psalm 127:3-5 (NIV)

- **God's *instructions* to parents**

*<sup>1</sup>Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup>Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), <sup>3</sup>that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth. <sup>4</sup>And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

Ephesians 6:1-4 (NIV)

- **Summary:** Children are a gift from God, a sacred stewardship temporarily entrusted to parents for the purpose of raising godly offspring to fulfill God's agenda for His world.

- **The Question:** What does a godly parent look like?

## Four snapshots of a godly parent

### 1. Godly parenting begins with positive, clear-cut **objectives**!

*Fathers, don't overcorrect your children or make it difficult for them to obey the commandment. Bring them up with Christian teaching in Christian discipline.*

Ephesians 6:4 (Phillips)

- The Principle of Focus
- God's Dream vs. The American Dream For Your Child

### 2. Godly parenting demands we **practice** what we **preach**.

*<sup>14</sup>I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children. <sup>15</sup>Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. <sup>16</sup>Therefore I urge you to imitate me.*

1 Corinthians 4:14-16 (NIV)

- The Principle of Modeling
- "More Is Caught Than Taught"

3. Godly parents build relationships that **bond**.

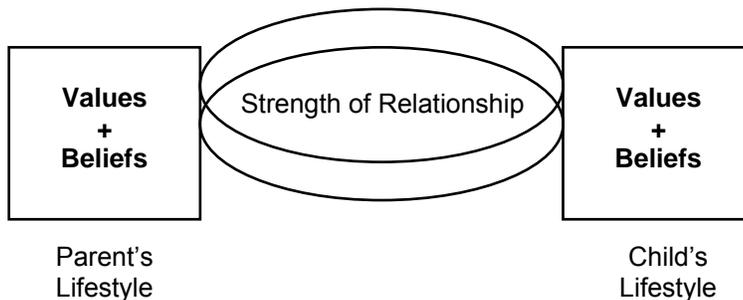
... <sup>7</sup>but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. <sup>8</sup>We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8 (NIV)

<sup>11</sup>For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, <sup>12</sup>encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into His kingdom and glory.

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 (NIV)

- The Principle of Relationship



- **Eight “Keys” That Build Relationships That Bond**

1. Unconditional love
2. Scheduled time
3. Focused attention
4. Eye contact
5. Meaningful touch
6. Ongoing communication
7. Having fun together
8. Praying together

4. Godly parenting requires **constant repair** and **ongoing maintenance**.

*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 (NIV)

- The Principle of Process
- 5 Magic Words – I'm sorry!  
Please forgive me!
- It's Never Too Late!

**Discussion Questions:**

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how positive of a parent are you?
2. Discuss which point was most helpful to you. Why?
3. Where do you need to focus some parenting energy? What specifically will the next step look like?

**The Question:** What's it take to raise kids who love God and love you when they're grown?

**The Answer:** Ephesians 6:4 – 4

**Key Words:**

1. "don't provoke" = overcorrect, be harsh, fault finding, perfectionist
2. "bring up" = nurture, rear, tenderly develop in the sphere of character and principles
3. "discipline" = nurture (KJV), chastise (RV), training (2 Tim. 3:16)
  - *It's what is done to the child.*
4. "instruction" = warn, admonish, correct, reprove, implore
  - *It's what is said to the child.*

**Summary:** We are to parent with LOVE and LIMITS

**Secular research's affirmation\* – 4 kinds of parents:**

1. **Permissive** = High love, low discipline
2. **Neglectful** = Low love, low discipline
3. **Authoritarian** = Low love, high discipline
4. **Authoritative** = High love, high discipline

\*Reuben Hill Minnesota Report

### God's prescription for child development:

<sup>4</sup>*In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.*

<sup>5</sup>*And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when He rebukes you,*

<sup>6</sup>*because the Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes everyone He accepts as a son."*

<sup>7</sup>*Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?*

<sup>8</sup>*If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.*

<sup>9</sup>*Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!*

<sup>10</sup>*Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness.*

<sup>11</sup>*No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*

Hebrews 12:4-11 (NIV)

**Summary:** Discipline is teaching **obedience** to God and His Word through **consistent consequences** (actions) and **clear instructions** (words) in an atmosphere of **love**.

- The **necessity** of discipline = To deter destruction Hebrews 12:4
- The **means** of discipline = Through actions and words Hebrews 12:5
- The **motive** in discipline = To express love Hebrews 12:6-9
- The **goal** of discipline = To teach obedience Hebrews 12:9
- The **result** of discipline = Short term pain and long term gain

Hebrews 12:10-11

**How to parent with love and limits:**

**Actions = Consistent Consequences**

Proverbs 13:24; 22:15

- Small Children
  
- Preteens
  
- Teens

**Words = Clear instructions**

Proverbs 1:8; 2:1-2; 3:1; 7:1-2

- Small Children
  
- Preteens
  
- Teens

**Punishment**

**Discipline**

	<b>Punishment</b>	<b>Discipline</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	To inflict penalty for an offense	To train for correction and maturity
<b>Focus</b>	Past misdeeds	Future correct acts
<b>Attitude</b>	Hostility and frustration on the part of the parent	Love and concern on the part of the parent
<b>Resulting emotion in the child</b>	Fear and guilt	Security

For further teaching on child discipline, see *Effective Parenting in a Defective World* by Chip Ingram

### **Practical tips for balanced parenting:**

1. Have a few, clear rules / responsibilities.
2. Develop written contracts.
3. Negotiate consequences.
4. Be consistent!
5. The older they get, the fewer the rules.
6. Train them to be on their own.

#### ➤ **Develop A Game-Plan**

1. Evaluate where your kids are
2. Evaluate parenting style
3. Do some research
4. Develop an action plan

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. How would you classify your parenting style or tendency compared to the case study? Discuss your answer.
2. What is the difference between **discipline** and **punishment**?
3. What are your top two disciplinary problems with your children? What means of action/consequences or instruction would help your child learn obedience?
4. What **specific step** do you need to take to align your parenting with God's pattern to bring out the best in your child?

Resources: *Parenting with Love and Logic* by Kevin Lema  
*Dare to Discipline* by James Dobson

## **Introduction: God's first words to children**

The Command - *Honor your father and your mother,*

The Promise - *so that you may live long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.*

Exodus 20:12 (NIV)

### **1. What does it mean to “honor” your parents?**

- Definition = literally “to be heavy, glorify, to ascribe value and worth, to respect, to hold in high regard”
  
- Word usage in the Old Testament =

### **2. Why did God give this command?**

- a. Foundation for human relationships
  
- b. Foundation for respect of authority
  
- c. Foundation of human development

### 3. What does it look like to honor our parents?

- As a child, I honor my parents by **obeying** them.

<sup>1</sup>***Children**, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*

<sup>2</sup>*Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), <sup>3</sup>that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.*

Ephesians 6:1-3 (NIV)

- As a young person, I honor my parents by **respecting** and **cooperating** with them.

*Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.*

Proverbs 23:22 (NIV)

*If you curse your parents, your life will end like a lamp that goes out in the dark.*

Proverbs 20:20 (NIV)

See also: Romans 1:30, 2 Timothy 3:2

- As an adult, I honor my parents by affirmation and provision.

*The father of a **righteous man** has great joy; he who has a **wise son** delights in him.*

Proverbs 23:24 (NIV)

*Do not withhold good from **those who deserve it**, when it is in your power to act.*

Proverbs 3:27 (NIV)

*But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice **by caring for their own family** and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.*

1Timothy 5:4 (NIV)

*If anyone does not **provide for his relatives**, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

1Timothy 5:8 (NIV)

See also: Matthew 15:1-9

**4. Are there times when we can’t honor our parents’ wishes? Yes!**

- The Priority of Salvation Mark 10:23–31
  
- The Priority of Service Luke 9:59–62
  
- The Priority of Marriage Ephesians 5:31-33
  
- The Priority of Wisdom Proverbs 9:7–9

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Why do you think God makes the family such a high priority? How does He feel about children?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How does our culture’s view of both “authority” and “aging” affect our obedience to the 5<sup>th</sup> Command?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. In what ways do you feel good about how you are “honoring your parents?” Which aspects need some attention? How will you address these?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Where do you find it difficult to “know” exactly what honoring your parents looks like? Who could you talk to get help in this area?

## **Introduction: What kids wished their parents knew about parenting and technology**

- *“I wish they knew how much I actually **need** them.”*
- *“I wish they knew that when they **have boundaries** it makes me feel loved.”*
- *“I wish I had open and honest **communication** with my dad [or mom].”*
- *“I wish they knew it’s **not** the same as it was when they were a kid.”*
- *“I wish they didn’t just **ignore** my use of the internet.”*
- *“I wish I didn’t have **unlimited, unmonitored** access to the internet.”*
- *“I wish we had real **time** as a family with **no** technology.”*

## I. What Do Parents Need to Know in Today's Tech World?

### 1. The **landscape** is constantly changing:

- a. Dial-Up → LAN [Ethernet] → Wireless/Bluetooth → ?
- b. Car Phone → Mobile Phone → Smart Phone → ?
- c. Tape → CD → MP3 [iPod → iPhone → iPad] → ?
- d. Atari → Nintendo → Xbox/PlayStation/Wii → ?
- e. MySpace → Facebook → Twitter → ?
- f. Email → Instant Message/Chat Rooms → Skype → ?

### 2. The **rules** are ever changing:

- a. You can overthrow an evil regime with a Tweet. [Egypt]
- b. Anyone at any time can become famous with a click [Bieber]
- c. Old is obsolete – New is not just nice it's necessary. [pager]
- d. You can change the world from your garage. [Gates/Jobs]
- e. Global Awareness has brought a global responsibility. [Bono- The 'One' Campaign]

### 3. The **dangers** are changing and growing:

- a. Viruses/identity theft/hackers
- b. Texting & driving
- c. Addictions
- d. Social networks/YouTube/Chat rooms
- e. Pornography/Violent or disturbing content
- f. Gaming [violent, sexual content, social, online]
- g. Access anytime, anyplace to anything
- h. Disillusionment with reality
- i. Anonymizers
- j. Peer-to-peer [p2p] also called 'Torrents'
- k. Online predators
- l. Cyber-bullying
- m. Sexting/Sextortion

### 4. The basic **needs** and **desires** have NOT changed:

- a. Deep desire & need for community - [belonging]  
- *Family dinners, weekly game night*
- b. Deep desire & need for significance - [impact/importance]  
- *Go on a mission trip together, serve locally at a shelter*
- c. Deep desire & need for boundaries - [security/stability]  
- *Have a family contract & instill family values*

## II. What's The Game Plan?

### 1. Lead the **way**

- a. Become a student and a support
- b. Get help if necessary
- c. Download a monitoring/filtering software today
- d. Be consistent – Follow-up and follow through

### 2. Have the **talk** - often & openly

- a. Don't put it off – values/the why
- b. Create a safe environment for them to talk
- c. Internet safety & online dangers
- d. Ask questions
- e. Know the warning signs

### 3. Keep the **control**

- a. Keep the location public
- b. Set specific rules/contract
- c. Set parental controls on all internet devices & TV
- d. Time limits – gaming/internet/phone
- e. Restrictions – Nothing good happens after midnight

### 4. **Know** where they go

- a. When they are little [ages 0-12]: **Be a gate** [*filters*]
  - *A gate determines what enters the home and what leaves the home.*
- b. When they are older [ages 13-18]: **Be guardrails** [*monitor/accountability*]
  - *A guardrail is a system that is designed to divert potential disaster*

### 5. **Go** where they go

- a. Check online accounts like: Facebook/MySpace/YouTube/Twitter/Etc.
- b. Have all passwords for your child's online activity
- c. If your child has a profile, so should you & be their "friend."

### III. What Tools Are Out There to Help?

#### **Parental Controls:**

Almost every device today comes with Internet capability. Many devices [iPods, computers, Blue-rays, TV] come with a setting generally labeled parental controls. This is a good first step and should be enabled on all devices that are connected to the Internet. If a device does not have parental controls or the ability to enable a filtering or monitoring software do not allow it to be connected to the internet. *[note: not all parental controls are created equal nor do they all work in every area; test and make sure it is accomplishing what you want it to.]*

#### **Passwords:**

I've heard it said 'passwords are like underwear you never share them and you should change them often.' Parents need to know all the passwords and set the passwords for each internet device. Your child is smart so do not use obvious passwords [i.e. birthdays, pets, anniversaries] they may know or figure out.

#### **Social Network Privacy Settings:**

Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, YouTube all have privacy settings generally under 'Account.' Enabling this allows you to control what content is publicly shared to 'non-friends' about your child, such as photos, name, location.

#### **Covenant Eyes:** <http://www.covenanteyes.com/>

This is an excellent filtering and monitoring/accountability software that you download on to your computer[s]. It has an application for your smart phone as well, however, the user must disable the current web browser and use the Covenant Eyes App as the web browser. Covenant Eyes has a monthly cost to provide yourself or your family with the service. On the website they have excellent and helpful free resources in light of the changing tech world.

#### **Safe Eyes:** <http://www.internetsafety.com/>

This site is great for those with young kids. As a filtering/monitoring software, it provides excellent resources and up-to-date information and advice for parents. There is an annual subscription and fee.

#### **XXXChurch:** <http://www.xxxchurch.com/>

XXXChurch is an accountability software that provides both free and paid subscription for internet accountability. This is an excellent site for those who are struggling with a porn addiction and need accountability and resources.

#### **Enough-Is-Enough:** <http://www.internetsafety101.org/>

This site offers free information for parents on how to keep their child safe in a digital world. It offers excellent advice and steps to take for parents who are wondering what they do at different stages and ages for their kids.

## Introduction: A Story of Hope and Restoration – Ruth 1-4

### Naomi's Story

- Widow → Single Parent → Grieving Mother
- Living in a foreign land without help or hope
- Becomes the mother of a non-Jewish daughter-in-law

### Naomi's Wisdom

- She returned to God and His people.
- She faced her pain and loss.
- She followed God's word (2:20), not the world (3:10).

**Result:** God rewarded and restored her life and family.

**Premise:** Single parents and blended families (for whatever cause), are not God's ideal, but His grace is sufficient to overcome any and every obstacle if we surrender fully & holy wholly unto Him.

## I. Single Parenting – Principles and Practice

- **What We Know . . .**

1. It's a high and growing percent of all families.
2. A single parent can NOT provide the same quality of care and quantity of time as a two parent home.
3. With God nothing is impossible – Luke 1:37, Jeremiah 32:17

- **What Must You Do?**

1. **Make** your relationship with Christ your #1 priority.
2. Get **connected** with a strong, godly, same sex group for support and accountability.
3. **Accept** this “season” of your life and set realistic expectations.
4. Remember God can “make-up” for what you can't give your kids.
5. **Refuse** to become a victim, a martyr, or a super parent.
6. Don't **compromise** your spiritual and moral standards to “provide a father/mother” for your children.
7. A story to remember God's faithfulness and grace.

## II. Blended Families – Principles and Practice

- **What We Know . . .**

1. Blended families rarely, if ever, “fully” blend.
2. Every family relationship is a system; when one relational component changes, there is a domino effect that changes the whole system.
3. Honesty – it rarely works well or easily; success requires extreme effort, time, intentionality and outside help.

- **What Must You Do?**

1. Count the cost thoroughly.
2. Get pre-marital counseling from a mutually trusted, biblical, and wise resource.
  - Work through expectations
  - Work through specific finances
  - Talk through the impact on each child
  - Agree on parenting goals, discipline, and a common front with all kids

3. Make your mate your new, unequivocal #1 relationship ahead of children.
  
4. Develop a weekly communication tool and mechanism to wrestle family conflicts, schedules, and miscommunication to the ground in a nonthreatening and safe environment.
  
5. Make the spiritual development of your marriage and family the utmost priority; only God and supernatural love can make this work - you don't have that apart from vital union with Christ in the context of a strong, loving, biblical community.
  
6. Remember it will take time, it will be harder than you thought, and it can be a glorious testimony of God's restoration and redemption – so don't quit, don't withdraw, don't bail out, and know that God will bring results.

See: James 1:2-4  
and Hebrews 10:36