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The Drama of Parenting— Parenting 201

Ephesians 6:1-4

PowerPoint Presentation: None

Keywords: Parenting, Children, Family, Discipline, Obedience, Honor, Self-Control

SermonAudio blurb: none

I. Introduction.

- A. Last week I shared a Chinese proverb that says, “One generation plants the trees, the next generation gets the shade.”
 - 1. Our society has been planting scrub brush for generations.
 - 2. Perhaps some of you have enjoyed the shade of godly parents, and others of you have only seen but the smallest of shade.
 - 3. But each of you must ask yourself, “what am I planting?”
- B. Today I want to build off of my sermon last week on parenting 101 and move on up a notch to parenting 202.
- C. One of the things I hope you will notice is how much I am focusing upon the parents in these messages.
 - 1. It is tempting to look at our children and think they are the problem or the issue but it is really going to be mom and dad.
 - 2. The more you own the things I am teaching in your personal and household lives the easier the specifics of parenting will be to the glory of God.

II. Parenting 201.

- A. These are essential, general parenting responsibilities.
- B. Broadly speaking, all aspects of the child’s life are in the hands of the parents to mold and build up. This is a tremendous responsibility that carries great blessing if done well.
- C. Break from being child-centered.
 - 1. A child-centered parent is on the brink of becoming an idolater.
 - 2. Charles Spurgeon once said this during a sermon of his: “A mother who had lost her babe, fretted and rebelled about it. She happened to be in a meeting of the Society of Friends, and there was nothing spoken that

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morning except this words by one female Friend, who was moved, I doubt not, by the Spirit of God to say, ‘Verily, I perceive that children are idols.’ She did not know the condition of that mourner’s mind, but it was the right word, and she to whom God applied it to knew how true it was. She submitted her rebellious will, and at once was comforted. A proper and right love of children should be cultivated; but to carry this beyond its due measure is to grieve the Spirit of God. If you make idols of children you have done the worst you can for them, whether they live or die. Cease from such folly.”

3. The Bible consistently speaks of having anything before God Himself.
 - a. Matthew 6:24 “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”
 - b. Deuteronomy 5:7 “You shall have no other gods before Me.”

D. The proactive and biblical parent.

1. This parent is not on the defensive, or reacting, to the day to day situations. Instead, he has a definite plan that he follows (the Bible) and perceives potential problems before they arise and deals with them.
 - a. Spiritual habits.
 - b. Speech.
 - c. Friends.
 - d. Time usage.
 - e. Eating habits or other issues of self-control.

E. Understands the presence and effects of sin.

1. This is a critical truth in parenting. The world overtly and subtly pushes an essential innocence in children. The Scripture does not indicate this, however.
2. Psalm 51:5 teaches that all children are born sinners.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

3. Psalm 58:3 says that from the womb we are separated from God.

The wicked are estranged from the womb; These who speak lies go astray from birth.

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4. Ephesians 2:2-3 shows us that every child is under the wrath of God due to their sin nature.

..... in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

F. Understands the heart of the child.

1. Psalm 58:2 says that sinful actions proceed from the heart.

No, in heart you work unrighteousness; On earth you weigh out the violence of your hands.

2. Proverbs 22:15 teaches that the heart of every child is abounding in foolishness.

Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.

G. Understands that sin corrupts even the conscience of the child.

1. Psalm 19:12 shows that we can't properly discern our personal sin apart from God's help.

Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults.

2. Proverbs 16:2 shows that the conscience can often deceive us into thinking we are doing right.

All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the LORD weighs the motives.

H. Understands that there is only a certain amount of time available.

1. Proverbs 19:18

Discipline your son while there is hope, And do not desire his death.

I. Understands the four areas of human development in the biblical world (Luke 2:52).

1. "Wisdom"—Mentally.
2. "Stature"—Physically.
3. "Favor with God"—Spiritually.
4. "Favor with man"—Socially.

J. Use your authority.

1. Too often parents are reluctant to act in an authoritative manner.

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- a. This is exasperated by the constant influx of false messages through the television, radio, and reading material.
 - b. We are told to be friends with our children, empower our children, or not put limits on our children.
 - c. As Americans we are brought up with a sense of disrespect for authority. We complain about infringements of our rights and believe it is our God-given right to protest anything we don't like.
 - d. You should never be reluctant to exert your authority, nor expect it to be honored. Start this early and it will much easier than trying to catch up later.
2. We must understand that we were given a mandate from God to raise up our children.
- a. The commands are simple to see: train up, discipline, instruct, rule, and provide.
 - b. Therefore, to be reluctant in obeying that mandate is nothing less than sinful.
 - c. One major improvement any parent can make immediately with the raising of their children is to not allowing the child to challenge the decisions you make.
3. Ted Tripp points out that “there is tremendous freedom here for a parent. When you direct, correct or discipline, you are not acting out of your own will, you are acting in behalf of God. You don't have to wonder if it is OK for you to be in charge. You certainly do not need your child's permission.” (*Shepherding A Child's Heart*, pp. 48-49)
- a. Mr. Tripp also warns against the parent becoming only an advisor.
 - (1) This happens when the child become the decision maker and the parent merely is the one who responds to those decisions.
 - (2) As the child enters into the teen years you will begin to exert less and less authority and more influence, but never to a detriment to the goal of training the child's heart.
 - (3) You and the child must understand that as long as they are in your household that you can exert that authority whenever you believe it is necessary.

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- (4) Young children do not need the freedom to “express their individuality” by making decisions on their clothing style, hair length, meals, or friends.
 - (5) They certainly have no authority to decide their relationship with church attendance!
 - b. Tedd Tripp makes another key observation when he points out that the child will “be good decision makers as they observe faithful parents modeling and instructing wise direction and decision making in their behalf.” (*Shepherding*, pp. 50)
- K. Be humble.
 - 1. Understand that you are handling the property of God (your children) and that He is the one who has given you the mandate to train and shepherd them.
 - 2. Carry a spirit of humility into that relationship.
 - 3. Philippians 2:3 should be a pattern of your life.
 - 4. **At the same time, do not mistake the exertion of authority with pride.** Humility is an attitude that seeks the well-being of others, but also is an attitude the recognizes that an account will be asked for by the Lord.
 - a. At times you may inappropriately discipline your child. The most common situations are when you are improperly angry, or you are seeking vengeance rather than discipline.
 - b. This is where you need to humble yourself and go confess that sin to your child.
 - (1) I would encourage you to also then pray with the child and confess your sin to the Lord in the presence of the child.
 - (2) That way he sees the spiritual dimension as well.
 - c. At the same time, if the discipline, though done wrongly, was for proper reasons, you will need to make that clear to the child so that they do not get the wrong impression that they were right in their behavior.
- L. The “do nots” of biblical parenting.
 - 1. Do not provoke your child to anger (Ephesians 6:4).

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Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

- a. The word we translate “provoke to anger” means to goad or push your child into a state of resentment and jealousy.
 - (1) It is important to understand that the Bible is not saying that you are wrong by establishing a proper and fair standard in your home, if your child responds to it in an angry fashion.
 - (2) It is also not justifying the anger of the child, merely stating that the child’s anger is a direct result of unbiblical parenting.
- b. The father who pushes his child to anger is a father who is not concerned about developing the heart of his child.
- c. Another aspect to this is that when the Bible speaks of God being provoked to anger it is due to ungodly behavior from others. If that is part of the intent, then Paul is warning against being an unrighteous father who is constantly offending the senses of the child.
- d. Anger puts up walls that hinder the training of the child.
- e. What are some ways we can do this?
 - (1) Impatient.
 - (a) Not listening—Proverbs 18:13, “He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him.”
 - (b) Not showing tolerance—Ephesians 4:1-2, “Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness [power under control], with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love.”
 - (2) Legalistic.
 - (a) One form of this is seen is that the child’s relationship with you is purely based upon his keeping of rules (works righteousness).

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- (b) This is also accomplished by placing personal standards and rules at the same level as biblical commands and standards.
 - i) You need to allow for mistakes.
 - ii) You also should not see every mistake as sin.
- (c) The worst way is to burden the child with an endless list of rules and regulations (cf. Matthew 23:4).

They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger.

(3) Hypocritical.

- (a) Going back on your word or being crafty in how you “promise.”
 - i) Matthew 5:37 tells us to simply say what we mean and follow through with it.

But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; anything beyond these is of evil.

- ii) Proverbs 6:12-13 condemns as wicked the one who says one thing but actually means another.

A worthless person, a wicked man, Is the one who walks with a perverse mouth, Who winks with his eyes, who signals with his feet, Who points with his fingers.

- iii) Colossians 3:9 tells us not to lie to one another.

Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices.

- (b) Having one standard for your children and another for yourself.
 - i) Matthew 7:1-5 tells us that before we point out another’s fault we need to first look to ourselves, dealing with our problem first.

Do not judge so that you will not be judged. "For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. "Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and

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behold, the log is in your own eye? "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

- ii) You require your child to go patch up a relationship with another person, but refuse to do so yourself.
- iii) Types of movies watched, language used, food eaten, etc.

(4) Pride.

- (a) This is such a broad category that almost everything falls into it.
- (b) One area that can be very serious is refusing to confess sin that you have done against your child.
 - i) Proverbs 28:13

He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.

- ii) James 4:6

But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."

- iii) James 5:16

Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

(5) Anger.

- (a) Proverbs 29:22 teaches that expressing anger will result in strife.

An angry man stirs up strife, And a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression.

- (b) Proverbs 30:33

For the churning of milk produces butter, And pressing the nose brings forth blood; So the churning of anger produces strife.

(6) Sarcastic.

- (a) This is too common within homes. There is a fine line between teasing and cutting sarcasm.

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- i) Ephesians 4:29 says, “Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.”
 - a) Note the broadness of the command (and yes, it is a command, not a suggestion).
 - b) The idea is that you speak so as to build up, not tear down.
 - c) By implication then, the unwholesome word does not give grace to those who hear.
- (b) Proverbs 15:1, “A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.”
- (c) Proverbs 25:23 promises that a “backbiting tongue” will bring out anger in the other person.

The north wind brings forth rain, And a backbiting tongue, an angry countenance.

- (d) Colossians 3:8

But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.

- (7) Favoritism.
 - (a) The story of Joseph is a fitting illustration of this. The Bible tells us that Jacob loved Joseph more than the other children and the result was hatred in the brothers toward Joseph (cf. Genesis 37:1-4).
 - (b) Proverbs 24:23

These also are sayings of the wise. To show partiality in judgment is not good.

- f. What can happen if we choose to ignore this command?
 - (1) Rebellion (Proverbs 19:19).

A man of great anger will bear the penalty, For if you rescue him, you will only have to do it again.

- (2) Hatred (Genesis 37:3-4).

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Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic. His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and so they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms.

- (3) Lack of self-control in our children (Proverbs 25:28).

Like a city that is broken into and without walls Is a man who has no control over his spirit.

- (4) Rash and foolish decisions that can result in long term consequences.

(a) Esther 1 tells of the king of Persia ordering his wife to dance before his assembled guests. Most likely she was to dance in a suggestive or filthy manner and she refused. The Bible tells us that as a result the king's anger burned and he had his wife put away from him forever.

(b) Matthew 2 tells of how Herod had wanted the Magi to come back and tell him where Jesus was at. When they did not return he flew into a rage and had all the male children under two in Bethlehem killed.

(c) As a police officer, I arrested many people who had committed very serious offences simply out of anger.

2. Do not exasperate your child (Colossians 3:12).

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

a. This word means to rouse to jealousy and bitterness.

b. The same things that apply to provoking your child to anger apply here.

3. Do not withhold physical discipline (Proverbs 13:24).

He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.

III. Conclusion.

A. For each parent and grandparent in this room, if you took to heart last week's message and will apply this week's message immediately you will begin to establish a foundation from which good things might be built.

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- B. Humility and a long view of life are both so important to parenting.
- C. A desire to honor the Lord in this massive part of your life is critical. It is owning the words of Paul in Ephesians 4:1 where he entreats us to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.