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The Drama of Parenting— Parenting 451

Ephesians 6:1-4

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I. Introduction.

- A. When I left I gave you all an assignment:
 - 1. Parents are to do a lot of self-examination over the points taught so far in this series.
 - 2. Develop a list of points to change, develop or strengthen.
 - 3. Develop a plan of “attack” and then implement it.
- B. Review – The "do's" of biblical parenting.
 - 1. The key points are to teach obedience and respect.
 - 2. Various passages on respect/honor:
 - a. Ephesians 6:1-2
 - b. Philippians 2:3
 - c. 1 Peter 2:17
- C. When we are a disrespectful we dishonor our parents regardless if it was overtly directed toward them. Therefore, a major part of raising your children is modeling respect/honor and instructing them in it.
- D. Respect defined is simply “the attitude of having consideration and high regard for another person. This attitude shows itself outwardly through actions of obedience and overt concern regarding the other person and anything related to him.”
 - 1. The desire of the person’s heart who is respectful is to show honor to the other person.
 - 2. True respect also carries a sense of fear toward the person. This is most commonly seen in our relationship with God, but also applies to anyone who is in true authority over us. Therefore it is proper and healthy to have your children have a sense of fear, as long as it is out of respect.

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- E. The Bible tells us that Christians are **light** and **salt** in this world (Matthew 5:13-14). It is interesting to note that the Lord does not tell us to *be* salt or light, simply that we *are* those things.
1. Our lives are an example to the entire world of the work that Jesus Christ is doing in us.
 2. The real question is what kind of salt and light are you as a family? It is not enough to just exist, we are to be exhibiting our new life in every area of our existence.
 3. It is out of this declaration that we want to train up children who are morally, spiritually, and socially excellent. This is where respect comes in.
 4. Three key principles to live by regarding the training of respect in children.
 - a. First, as has already been said, you must have this virtue within your own life. If you don't, then begin to cultivate it now.
 - b. Second, do not assume that they will just develop it on their own. If you do not train them up to your higher standards, then someone else will most assuredly train them down to a lower standard.
 - c. Third, use everyday occurrences to illustrate both positively and negatively the concept of true respect.
 - (1) If you see a child playing with a toy and being destructive with it, point it out to your child and use it to talk about respecting things.
 - (2) If you see someone speak to another person in a submissive and respectful manner, seize that opportunity to illustrate respect. Quiz the child on how that person handled himself. Could the person have done it better? What was his demeanor? How did he talk to the person? What were the words he used?
 - (3) Make sure you are doing this in an instructive manner. There is no reason to be saying (especially loudly), "look at Suzy, see how she talks to her parents, why don't you act like that?" Keep your tone soft and gracious. You are using these opportunities to help support the things you are teaching in your home.

II. Spheres of respect.

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A. God.

1. Genesis 22:12 in context.
2. Deuteronomy 10:12.
3. This of course is the preeminent one. Children need to be taught to fear God. This is done by you as a parent showing your children how you fear God.
4. There are various ways that you can develop this in their lives.
 - a. Not tolerating flippant speech regarding God. It is bothersome to me when I listen to jokes that include God.
 - (1) I do not allow these types of jokes in my house, nor do I try to speak in this manner.
 - (2) Another way this is done is through the use of phrases such as “Oh God.....” or “Oh my God.....”
 - (3) Some may choose to take it even further with not allowing terms like ‘gosh’ or ‘jeez.’ The background of these are from God and Jesus.
 - b. Whenever they are disobedient, remind them that not only are you displeased, but the Lord is as well.
 - (1) The child must develop a sensitive conscience regarding his sinful character before the Lord.
 - (2) This is critical to preparing their hearts to embrace the gospel.
 - c. If you ever hear the child (common with older children) who speaks about God or the Church (Christ’s Body) in a bored or lackadaisical manner confront it head-on. Challenge the child to defend that attitude, especially if he professes to be a believer.
5. Start this from the very beginning. Make much of the glory and majesty and holiness of God. Frame all that you do in light of living in fear and reverence of God. Confront unbelief in your children.

B. Parents.

1. Ephesians 6:2.

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2. Your children must be expected to respect you. This is not an option for without it, you will never be able to teach them, nor will they be able to receive the blessing of the Lord.
3. There is no proper respect for a parent when a child throws tantrums, whines, argues, lies to, or manipulates him.
4. If your child, no matter how old, blatantly challenges your authority and right to express that authority, it must be met head-on. This can be downright miserable sometimes, because what is happening is a simple battle of the wills and between right and wrong.
 - a. This is one of the most serious offenses that can occur in our home. It is never even slightly tolerated and has been taught since our children were only around 6 months old.
 - b. You may be dealing with an older child (16-17), whom you haven't properly trained before. He refuses to show this respect, and no amount of correction works. You may have to send him out of the household when he is 18. Don't let the fact that you didn't do certain things early on in their lives control you. They are still called to obey and honor you. Your sin does not excuse their sin.
5. An application of this in our household was that we taught our children that if they tried to touch or play with anything that wasn't theirs it was wrong. Why? Because it was not showing respect to that person. Therefore, anytime the children were found pulling on one of my books, sticking items into the VCR, or writing on a wall, they were disciplined. And during that time we would say things like:
 - a. "What did you do wrong?"
 - (1) "I was playing with the books."
 - b. "Was that your book?"
 - (1) "No." (If that is what our child did, we would correct them immediately with "No sir.")
 - c. "Then did you have permission to play with it?"
 - (1) "No sir."
 - d. "Whose book is it?"
 - (1) "Daddy's"

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- e. Were you obeying and respecting Daddy by playing with his things?”
 - (1) “No sir.”
- f. “What is that called?”
 - (1) “Disobedience.”
- g. “What else is it called?”
 - (1) “Sin.”
- h. “That’s right, so you not only didn’t show respect and honor to your daddy, but you sinned against God too. What do I need to do because of your disobedience?”
 - (1) “Discipline me.”

- 6. In other words, everything you do is trying to develop a sense of respect in your child’s heart. I may have never told my child not to touch my books, but I had told them to respect other people’s things. Therefore, under that broad principle a whole multitude of actions and attitudes are covered.

C. Church Elders.

- 1. Hebrews 13:17, “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”
 - a. Note that it is not saying that we are to obey the Word here, but the leaders. Why?
 - b. The obedience to the Word is a given, what leaders do is beyond the Word and in the giving of wisdom and application.
 - c. When you press back against instruction you place yourself in a precarious position.
- 2. Your children need to be taught to have a submissive and respectful attitude toward the leaders in the church.
- 3. I can speak from experience, that much heartache and struggle occurs in churches simply because the people do not desire to obey and submit to the leadership. Instead, they sit in judgment, they criticize them (usually behind their backs), they second guess them, and they tear down the very things that the leadership is trying to instill in the congregation.

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4. The writer of Hebrews tells you that you are to have them rule over you with joy, not grief.
5. Therefore, teach your children to respect the elders of the church.
 - a. Do not allow yourself, or them, to complain or criticize the leadership. If you disagree with the leadership, show your children a godly example and go to the leaders to talk to them.
 - b. Do not allow them to talk to the leadership in an inappropriate manner.
 - c. When they address and interact with a leader train them to do so in a proper, respectful manner.
 - d. I still remember a group of people early on in my ministry who openly stated that they enjoyed disrespecting me to keep me humble. None of them flourish to this day.

D. Authorities.

1. Romans 13:1ff.
2. God has established all authority on the earth. Therefore, when we resist that authority we are really resisting God. This must be driven home to the children.
3. When dealing with elected officials you also have a great teaching opportunity with your children. You are able to remind them that your hope lies not with those in the office, but in the Lord who sovereignly put them there
4. The idea of having authority over you is something that almost every human must deal with. For the Christian, this authority, wherever it is, it is honored.
5. To allow them to talk derogatorily about police, elected officials, school teachers, Sunday School teachers, supervisors at their part time job, or even lifeguards is simply wrong.
6. Teach them to show proper respect and honor to these people.
 - a. Here is a common problem in many homes. Junior's Sunday School teacher tells you that he is being disruptive in class and is not sharing with the other children. She says this in the presence of Junior. You say that you will deal with your child, but don't. Worse yet, you defend the child and assume that the teacher is in

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the wrong. All of this is seen and learned by your child and he quickly learns that the Sunday School teacher is no one important and not worthy of respect.

- b. You have an older child who has their first real job, at Wendy's. She comes home one night complaining that her boss is a "jerk." She tells you how her boss show partiality and makes her do all of the lousy jobs. She talked to her boss about this and was yelled at. Therefore she wants to quit work.
 - (1) Is this right?
 - (2) Are there other options?
 - (3) What are some Bible passages that come to mind?
 - (4) How would you instruct your child?
 - (5) Would anything change if what she described was correct?

E. Adults.

- 1. Children ought to show respect to their elders.
 - a. You shall rise up before the gray-headed, and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am the LORD. (Leviticus 19:32)
 - b. 1 Timothy 5:1-2 tells us to talk to those who are older with respect. In fact, they are to talk to them in the same way as they would their parents.
 - c. 1 Timothy 5:3 tells us to show honor to the godly widow.
 - d. Proverbs 16:31 teaches that grey hair is a crown of glory. Therefore, children ought to be expected to show honor to those who are their elders.
- 2. One simple, but strangely unpopular method of doing this is using the titles, Mr. ,Mrs. and Miss. In addition to this, you may want to consider having the child say, "yes, ma'am" and "yes sir." In fact, if you choose not to, then make certain you know why. You are choosing against this practical application.
- 3. One of the most common ways that children show disrespect to adults in through interruptions. This ought not to be allowed. A simple way to correct this is by having the child place his hand on your arm and wait to be acknowledged. If the child does interrupt, quietly explain to them that they have shown disrespect to you and the other adult, have them seek the

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other person's forgiveness, and then find out what they needed. If it was permission to do something, as a rule I have found it best to deny it, since it was done in an disrespectful manner.

4. Here are some other applications.
 - a. Children wait for the adults to be served during meals, picnics, etc.
 - b. Older children hold the door open for the adults.

F. Peers.

1. You need to create a spirit of sensitivity into your children with regard to other children.
2. Too often we seldom give any attention to how our children interact with others. As a result we see fights, arguments, and blatant disregard for the feelings of others.
3. Teach your child to respect other children and their things. Sharing is one aspect of respect. Gossip and backbiting is a way to show no respect.

G. Dominion.

1. This is a very critical area that needs to be developed in your child.
2. This refers to anything that is the responsibility of a person or persons that is either physical or non-physical, but primarily it is in the non-physical realm.
 - a. An example of dominion in the physical realm would be trespassing on someone's property that is fenced off, simply to use it as a shortcut without prior permission. This also applies to touching other people's property.
 - b. Examples of dominion in the non-physical realms:
 - (1) Time. Each of us is given an allotted amount of time each day to accomplish certain duties. Children have a great ability of blowing it all away simply through lack of discipline and lack of respect for others' time. Children need to be taught to honor other people's time, to not be intrusive, and to be sensitive to those around them. It is wrong to allow a child to cause others additional time delay simply because they are choosing disobedience. I have had my children go and seek the forgiveness of adults who had to wait extra time while we disciplined them. We told our

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children that because they chose disobedience they also showed disrespect to that person's time.

- (2) Authority. This is a major area to develop in your children. The Bible teaches that we all have spheres of authority that we operate within. In the church it is the elders, in society it is the government, in the home it is the father, and in the workplace it is the boss. We are not to usurp their authority. We are also not to be in the habit of second guessing it. Therefore, if Junior comes home complaining about his friend's mother who made his friend come in early to do some extra chores, you need to be quick to correct Junior. He is not showing respect for her dominion as "mother."
3. When you begin to consider this principle, it begins to naturally flow into many areas of life that you never considered before.
 - a. You begin rethink allowing Johnny to pick flowers at the park, since they are not his and that he is not respecting the rest of the people who come to the park to enjoy those flowers.
 - b. You begin to teach your child to stop leaving church bulletins and crayon wrappings in and around the pew. Not because it is good to be neat, but because to fail to do so is disrespectful of a domain that is not theirs. Other people must take time and effort to clean up after them and that is disrespectful.
 - c. You see that allowing your children to cry and scream and resist going to Sunday School is disrespectful of the domain and authority of the teacher. Johnny needs to be taught that life does not revolve around his likes and dislikes and that he, as a child and as a human is to show proper respect for other people and their area of responsibility.
 - d. One last example. I remember working at a large church as the Director of Human Resources. I had to help resolve a problem where the large custodial staff was being accused of not doing their job well and were leaving the bathrooms messy. The custodial staff were growing frustrated because they were working hard but were seeming to never to their job well enough. One day, I was in one of the bathrooms and it was neat. I was with one of the men who was most vocal about the custodian's lack of cleaning. This man washed his hands, then splattered water all over the mirror.

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He then pulled out the paper towel to dry his hands. He tossed the used paper into the trash container, but it bounced off and landed on the floor, but the man left it there and began to walk out. I confronted this man on what he had done. I challenged him in that he was showing utter disrespect for the building which was not his, and the custodians who had just cleaned the room that he had just helped mess back up. The result? He sought their forgiveness and the matter was dropped for the time.

H. Creation.

1. God has created the earth for us. We are called to be good stewards of it.
2. Therefore, teach your children to show respect to it.
3. The following are some simple examples.
 - a. Littering.
 - b. Defacing things, such as rocks and trees.
 - c. Destructive behavior, such as uprooting a plant for no good reason.”
4. With hunting, you only hunt what you can use and the same with fishing.
5. When it comes to destroying something, you only do it if it is a threat to you.
 - a. In one of our homes in California we had an infestation of Black Widow spiders. Each night I would go out and kill around thirty of them and this went on for several weeks. I had no problem doing so, for they represented a real threat to my home.
 - b. Another time I was out shooting skeet with a pastor and his son. We were done for the day and this man’s son saw a ground squirrel. Now we were out in the desert and that squirrel was doing what God had made him for. He certainly was no threat to anyone. But the young man shot it with his air rifle anyhow. I remember the sense of disquiet I had as we looked at the squirrel. It was left there on the ground for whatever scavenger would find it. The problem was simple, we had not shown respect for the Lord’s creation, rather, we had run roughshod over it.

III. Conclusion.

- A. Parents, please learn this point well, for you model it to your children.

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- B. When you choose to be lax on the training of your children so that when they come to other people's homes and then control it through whining, tantrums, interruptions, grabbing, breaking, etc. all you are doing is saying, "I don't respect you." And believe me, the children learn that quickly.
- C. Disrespect is in the heart of every child and it is your responsibility to confront it and shepherd that child. The fruit is worth the challenges you will face.