

## **“The Goal: Faithfulness not Success”**

For the week of March 1, 2020

### **In A Nutshell**

The goal of parenting is “to gradually help transfer a child's dependence away from the parents until their dependence rests solely on God.” It is not merely about providing good input so that your child becomes a good, well-adjusted, well-behaved, intelligent citizen. It is about creating an environment where kids interact with the living God; where they learn to fear the Lord and live life in Him; where they see and hear the gospel lived daily. Finally, it is about helping our children come to know, love, and enjoy Jesus and find their life in Him.

### **Startup Question**

Here's a fact everyone can agree on: Parenting is tough! Yet, being the kind of parent God wants you to be is even tougher. Here's another fact: We all live in a messy, secular world. There is a phrase that says simply: “As God is to me, so I must be to my kids.” Knowing all this, how can you be a gospel-centered parent in a non-gospel world? What does that look like? What are the challenges and how have you responded to these challenges? Share in your community group.

### **Seven Aspects**

There are seven aspects that help create an environment where children interact with the loving God and help to define what it means to transfer dependence from God.

#### **1. Remember that God asks for faithfulness, not necessarily success.**

God does not have to work at being faithful; He is faithful! Look up these passages and identify how God is faithful to us (2 Thessalonians 3:3; 1 John 1:9; 1 Corinthians 1:9; Philippians 1:6). What are ways a Christian parent can be faithful to God? How does being faithful to God not always result in worldly success? Give examples.

#### **2. Let your kids see you following Jesus. Your love for God must be real.**

First, check out these passages that show the reality of God's love for us (Romans 5:7-9, 8:35-39; 1 John 4:7-19). After reading these passages, describe in your own words how much God loves us. Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Mark 12:28-31. What is the primary responsibility we have as people and as parents?

What are ways a Christian parent can demonstrate their love for God at home? How about when you are with your kiddos at a store or restaurant or a sporting event?

### **3. Give your kids grace and offer and receive forgiveness.**

What is grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)? How does grace and forgiveness go hand-in-hand? Give examples on how a parent can model grace and forgiveness to your child.

### **4. Cover your kids and you with prayer.**

Here are some things to pray over for your children:

- May they know that God's love for them is everlasting (Psalm 103:17)
- May they cultivate a grateful heart (Psalm 118:28)
- May they be filled with joy and peace (Romans 15:13)
- May they be a blessing to everyone they meet (1 Peter 3:9)
- May they listen to Your Word and do what it says (Luke 11:28)
- May they never walk away from You; may they draw closer to You so You will be near them (James 4:8)

List any other things you pray for your children not listed above. Discuss all of this in your community group.

### **5. Live life with a "parable" perspective.**

A parable is defined as a simple story to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson. How can a parent see their life as a parable to exemplify God to their children?

### **6. Emphasize relationships over rules.**

Why would a parent emphasize relationships over rules? Don't rules matter? What is the concern if rules only are emphasized? Discuss what this means in your community group.

### **7. Learn to live with ambivalent feelings.**

Sometimes it is difficult to understand we live in a world where both good and evil co-exist. Likewise, our children are good kids who are also bad at times. How does a parent deal with ambivalence with their children?

**One More:** Concentrate on process, not product. You will never stop being a parent. It changes at each stage of your life and at each stage of your child's life. Describe how parenting has changed for you over the years.