

2 John 1:4 “Some of Your Children...”

9.13.17

The apostle John wrote this book near the end of the first century. He was an old man by this time and he's desperately trying to keep the churches in Asia Minor on track. There has been such an **attack on the truth by false teachers** that John ends up writing these three short epistles, 1, 2nd and 3rd John to address this false teaching. He's got to make sure the truth of Jesus Christ is preserved and passed on correctly.

John is centered and laser-focused on the TRUTH, and here in this second epistle John is writing about the false teachers are trying to worm their way into the churches by way of the kindness and the hospitality of a dear lady.

2 John 1:1-4

¹The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who know the truth, ²because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever: ³Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son, in truth and love. ⁴I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father.


The title of tonight's message is: “Some of Your Children...” That phrase just struck me. Only “some of your children...are walking in the truth.” That's really a sad phrase. It got me thinking about “raising children” and the challenge that is in our culture.

So I thought I'd share with you how a lady chose to raise her children over 200 years ago. Look at the notes from her memoirs collected by her children. Get this! She raised 19 children! I said 19!! She called these her “16 rules” and they were non-negotiable.

- (1) Eating between meals is not allowed.
 - (2) In bed by 8 PM.
 - (3) Take medicine without complaining.
 - (4) Subdued self-will (working together with God) to save the child's soul. (break the will, not the spirit)
 - (5) Teach to pray as soon as he/she can speak.
 - (6) Require all to be still during Family Worship.
 - (7) Give them nothing they cry for, and only that which they ask for politely.
 - (8) To prevent lying, punish that which is not confessed and repented.
 - (9) Sinful attitudes will not go unpunished.
 - (10) Never punish a child for a single offense.
 - (11) Commend and reward good behavior.
 - (12) Any attempt to please, even if poorly performed, should be commended
 - (13) Preserve property rights, even in smallest matters.
 - (14) Strictly observe all promises.
 - (15) Require no child to work before they can read well.
 - (16) Teach children to fear the Lord.
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Who did this? This lady...

Susanna Wesley



Who gave birth to 19 children, including John and Charles Wesley. They credited her prayerful instruction and godly example as shaping the whole direction of their lives dedicated to holiness and Revival.

Susanna Wesley



Help me, Lord, to remember that religion is not to be confined to the church... nor exercised only in prayer and meditation, but that every where I am in Thy Presence

AZ QUOTES

The child that never learns to obey his parents in the home will not obey God or man out of the home.

Susanna Wesley

2 John 1:4

4 I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father.

You know we are commanded to teach and train our children. So, what does this look like? Well, I read this week about a man who was complaining about his mother when he was growing up with his brother. Listen to what he said:

"We had the meanest mother in the whole world! While other kids ate candy for breakfast, we had to have cereal, eggs, and toast. When others had a Pepsi and a Twinkie for lunch, we had to eat sandwiches with ham and cheese and carrot sticks on the side. And yes, you can guess our mother NEVER fixed us a dinner that was different from hers and dad's. We ate what they ate.

Mother insisted on knowing where we were at all times. Yes, we had the meanest mother! You'd think we were convicts in a prison. She had to know who our friends were, and what we were doing with them. She was adamant that if we said we would be gone for an hour, we would be gone for only an hour, or less.

We're ashamed to admit it, but she had the nerve to break the Child Labor Laws by making us work. We actually had chores to do and can you believe this, it included actually washing dishes with our hands (we had no dishwasher). She said, we were the dishwasher. She made us do all sorts of cruel jobs. I think she would lie awake at night thinking of more things for us to do. We even had to make our own beds, can you believe that. She made us learn to cook, vacuum the floors, and do our own laundry, which included putting the said laundry in the drawers of our dressers. God forbid!

She made us get up early on Sundays and go to church, even when we were tired! Momma always insisted on us telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. I thought for years the people in the courthouse got that phrase from her when I watched a courtroom scene on TV!

Well, by the time we were teenagers, we believe she could actually read our minds. Don't ask me how! But, she could! Life was really tough with the meanest mother! Mother wouldn't let our friends just honk the horn when they drove up... They had to actually come in to the house and speak to her and daddy. What is more, while everyone else could date when they were 12 or 13, we had to wait until we were 16 and then, we could only do so in our home for dinner.

So, I'll admit it...all because of our mother we missed out on a lot of things other kids experienced. I guess I should let you know, me, nor my brother have ever been caught shoplifting, vandalizing other's property, drinking, smoking dope, or getting a girl in trouble...and it's all momma's fault.

In fact, as adults, we're both (me and brother) followers of Christ. We're educated, honest, reliable, productive adults. And today, we're both married to wonderful wives and we have kids and guess what we're trying our dead-level best to do? Be 'mean' like momma. Hey, maybe that's what's wrong with the world today. It just doesn't have enough 'mean moms' anymore!"

I say, "Amen and amen!" That was wonderful momma, wasn't it?

Look back at...

2 John 1:4

⁴ I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father.

Did you see that last phrase? "As we were commanded by the Father." God commands us to train and teach our children to walk in the truth. He expects us to raise our children to be godly.

But, it's not going to be easy. In fact, if you ask me, **parenting** is the **hardest thing I've ever done**. Why, because kids still have free will. So, don't think there's a formula that's 100% accurate, because there isn't. Yet, some people say this:

Love + Discipline + Godly Instruction = Good Kids

There are no formulas for raising perfect kids... There are commands/principles...but, they must be embraced and obeyed by the children. Children have free will. They aren't robots any more than we are. We all get to choose whether we obey or disobey. And so, at the end of the day, good kids are most certainly, primarily a by-product of, yes...love + discipline + godly training + the GRACE of God. It's by God's grace that kids might turn out to be godly.

I mean just look at the pages of Scripture of all those who blew it. David blew it... Solomon blew it...Read 1 and 2 Chronicles and 1 and 2 Kings...the leaders of the nation of Israel were up and down like a yo-yo ("He did evil in the sight of the Lord" versus "He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.") The Priest Eli blew it with his sons: Hophni and Phinehas. (Eli got it right in God's house and missed it in his house.)

Truly, all we have in ALL OF Scripture is only ONE multi-generational passing of the baton is: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...and they were all liars and struggled mightily in their lives having faith in God. Let this give you hope! God can make good kids from some really horrific family backgrounds, just like with some of you!

Yes, God expects us to parent with consistent love and wisdom, but He does not hold us responsible for the negative results that are driven by our children's own sin and their own chosen rebellion, when they reach adulthood. Yes, we must do the hard work of godly parenting, but the

results are ultimately in God's hands.

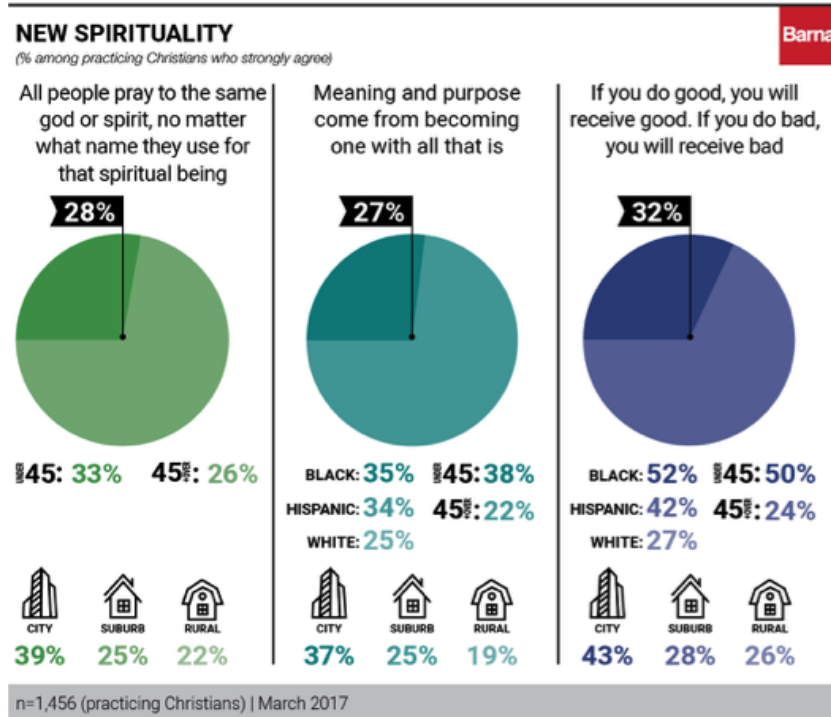
So, let's look our motivation. See verse 4 again...

2 John 1:4

4 I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father.

Our motivation is that God expects us to teach His commands.

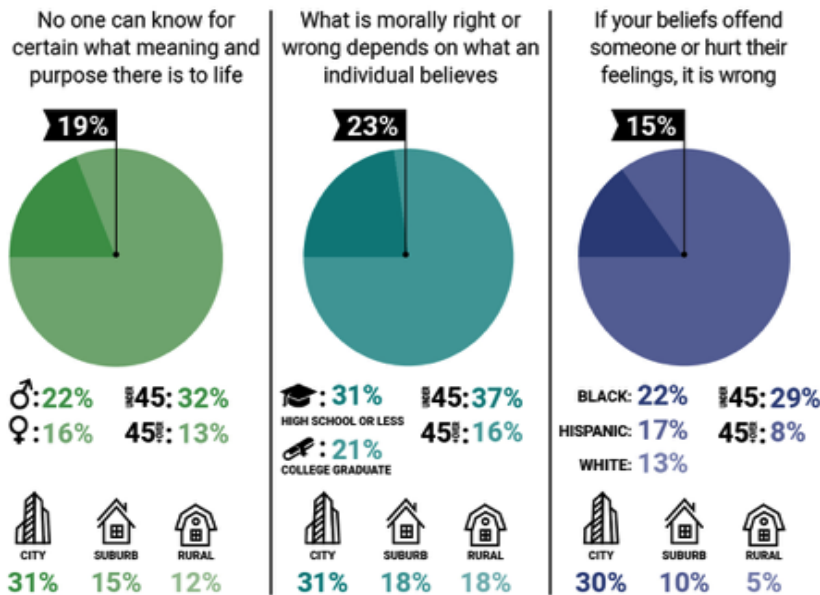
Church family, we must understand that we can't use **worldly methods** to produce godly children. We must use Scripture (that is the TRUTH) and spend some time in the Word of God consistently throughout the week or you can forget them having a foundation that will stand the pagan culture around them. We've got to spend time in the truth. But, I'm afraid we're not. Because we're too busy! And the results are in the stats? Remember these stats...it shows the world is influencing our kids more than we are and the Word of God



POSTMODERNISM

(% among practicing Christians who strongly agree)

Barna



n=1,456 (practicing Christians) | March 2017

You see, I'm afraid, church family, that many parents want the **by-product of teaching and godly training** without ever using the Word of God or spending time actually teaching and training their children. You've got to spend the time! And we don't...let's not wonder why our kids begin to think and believe what they think and believe. The truth is: We aren't raising them. The teachers, coaches, friends, the internet, the social media and pop culture is.

Listen, **parenting that's godly must be INTENTIONAL and it takes time.** It's not going to happen by osmosis. It's been said: "Parenting is like driving a car down a country dirt road, if you ever take your hands off the wheel, you'll wreck." Raising Godly children quite simply **takes time** and we must do it every moment that we can! Remember Deuteronomy 6:7?

Deuteronomy 6:7

⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

The word "You" there is a personal pronoun that's written in the masculine, men! Hey dad...we've got to **Talk, talk, talk...**to our family and we've got to be there to do it. We've got to have time in the home to do it.

But, I know people are so busy. So, you better get it where you can get it. Do it in the car, do it at home, on the way to school, everywhere you can! **But, particularly at night...at bedtime...** That's when they love to talk. You can sleep when your 60. Draw them into conversations with you. It's more than just talking to them; it's listening and talking *with* them.

So, Dad's let's be reminded of:

Ephesians 6:4

⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Church, turn with me to Psalm 78. The Psalmist is imploring fathers to teach and train their children. He will tell them that it's a command of God for them to teach their children His commands and this ties directly back to 2 John 1:4 "we're commanded by our Father (God)."

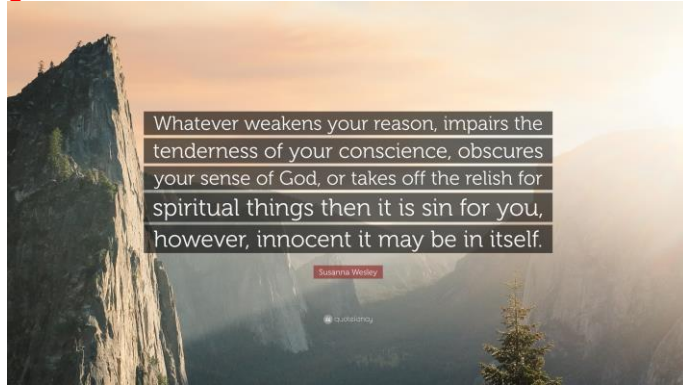
Psalm 78:5-7

⁵ He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, ⁶ that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, ⁷ so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.

Dad, do you teach your children? Do you ever lead a family devotion? Do you ever pray over your children, your wife? Out loud? **I often wonder**, why are so many men so wimpy spiritually? Why is it that we get so excited about hunting and football and rah, rah, rah...but, not about the things of God? I'll tell you why: Because we're stubborn!

Psalm 78:8

and that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.



Dad's, here's our marching orders.

Ephesians 6:4

⁴ Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

That's a command dads! How are you doing with it? Oh by the way, never forget this other famous verse about child-rearing, but please don't take it out of context:

Proverbs 22:6

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

The word: "Train" in Hebrew means to "inaugurate" and just as a nation inaugurates a President, and from that point on they always remain a president, even when they are out of office, if you and I train our children to walk after the Lord, then that should continue ALL THEIR LIVES.

You see, just like a president never stops being a president, this verse teaches that a child of God, should walk with God. (That's why the word "**EVEN**" is **there**. Here's the principle: the child of God should **never** be expected to stray from the way. No, it's not a guarantee, because kids have

free-will, but it is a principle that if we'll train our children in the ways of the Lord, they don't have to walk away.)

We'll close tonight by asking, "What kind of parent am I?"

3 Types of Parenting Styles:

1. Permissive
2. Authoritarian
3. Balanced/Consistent

#1 Permissive—Doing everything for the child. You want to be their friend. You try to be your child's PAL. You are constantly snow plowing your child's road for them. You do everything for them and you are afraid to tell them no, and basically, you become their servant. You are running a Holiday Inn instead of a home. You try to **bribe** your children. You count: 1, 2, 3...instead of expecting obedience. In essence, "the inmates are running the asylum." You explain everything to them, instead of expecting obedience. You're constantly being manipulated. The Bible says: **Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself. Proverbs 26:4** Remember, whatever we allow in **moderation** our children will take to **excess!**

Here are some quick questions to see if you are a permissive parent:

- Can your child say, "NO" to himself?
 - When they sin, do they take responsibility...(nothing is ever their fault)?
 - Do you have to fix two meals...one for you and one for them because they are PICKY?
 - Do they blame others if something doesn't go right for them?
 - Do they resent work, chores or responsibility
 - Are they lazy and tend to run from "work" around the house?
 - Do you have to bribe or manipulate them to do what you ask?
 - Do they roll their eyes, huff, puff and sigh when asked to do simple things?
 - Do they act ungrateful for the food, clothes and shelter they've been provided?
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#2 Authoritarian—You as a parent "Lord" over the child with an iron fist and run your home like a dictator. You are often cruel and use fear and various emotional tactics to shame your children into obedience. Often this parent is a CONTROL FREAK! You are so afraid your kids are going to embarrass you that it's more about you than the child. A child in this home never really feels secure and often internalizes fear and doubt. Children in this environment often stay in a cocoon and grow to become bitter, angry and even violent in their adult years. God's not dictator parent, nor should we be.

#3 Balanced/Consistent—this is the one we're looking to be. This is the parent that finds that middle ground and has realistic expectations based on the child's age, temperament and maturity. This is the parent that loves the child unconditionally, but has expectations, nonetheless. They are responsive to disobedience without reacting in anger and hostility. Yes, there are consequences for disobedience that are fair and expressed ahead of time. The discipline is consistent and loving.

Church family, I don't want 2 John 1:4 to be said to me by anyone...

2 John 1:4

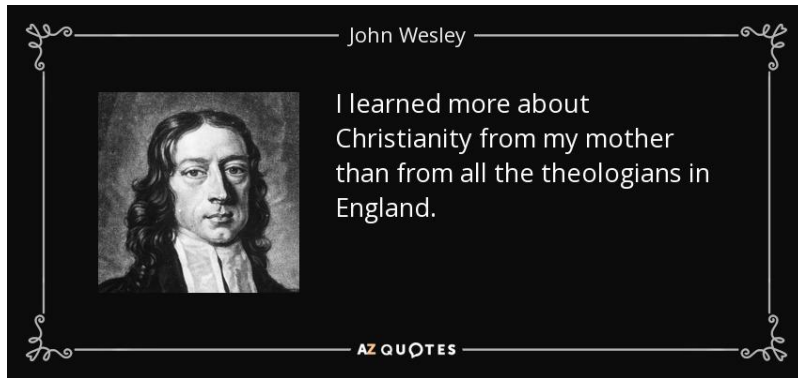
I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father.

You know what I want? I want 3 John 4, not 2 John 4.

3 John 4

4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

I love what John Wesley said about his momma:



Thank God for godly parents!