



Part 2: Benchmark

Early in parenthood, Andy and Sandra Stanley noticed a few things about the parents in their orbit who seemed to be doing a good job. Effective parents tended to have fewer rules, were not afraid of their children rejecting them, and facilitated their kid's interests, strengths, and talents rather than insisting their children embrace what was most interesting to them as parents. Effective parents also prioritized relationship over experience. But perhaps most importantly— whether they could articulate this or not, the best parents operated out of a profound sense of selfless patience in keeping with what Paul called, “the law of Christ.”

Start Talking

1. What fictional dad did you always wish you had when you were growing up? (*For instance: Steve Martin in Father of the Bride, Cliff Huxtable, Tony Stark.*) Why?

Looking Back

1. What aspects of yourself and your approach to life did you identify as keeping you from being the best partner you can? What did it look like for you to put other people first in that area of your life this last week?
2. What parts of your life did “a full dose of truth” probably disrupt for the better over the past few days? What changed?
3. Who did you extend “a full dose of grace” last week? What happened?
4. When did you find yourself denying *yourself* grace? When and how did you remind yourself that Jesus has conquered your inadequacies?



What About You?

1. Parenting has the potential to bring out the ego in us, the fear in us, the insecurity in us, the anger in us, and the ugly in us. Which one, if any, do you relate to the most?
2. Time for some brutal honesty: can you think of a time your ugliest fear, insecurity, or anger suddenly and surprisingly came out before you even knew what was happening? What went down?
3. Where did your parents fall on the Patient to Pushy continuum? Did either parent “exasperate” you in their effort to get you to excel?
4. Can you think of a time your parents ever put their ego in check and “took your side” in a way that made you feel valued? When?
5. Can you think of any times your parents refused to practice the patience necessary to move at your pace? How did it make you feel?

Look It Up

Read the following passage before answering the questions below: Luke 11:46. 1 Corinthians 13:4. Colossians 3:21.

1. What offended Jesus about the behavior of religious leaders in his time? How did his example differ from theirs?
2. How should what Paul called, “the law of Christ,” affect our approach to parenting? What are some examples of the implications of taking it seriously in parenting?
3. Why do you think Paul addressed parenting only once, by asking fathers not to exasperate their children? Does it strike you as oddly specific, or prescient? Why?
4. How do the qualities of love that Paul outlines here apply to parenting, in your mind? Which aspects of love do you find most difficult in parenting?

Putting It All Together

1. What does love require of you as a parent? Where could patience make a huge difference?
2. Who feels rushed by you? Who feels unnecessary pressure when you walk in the door? What would it look like for you to adjust your pace to theirs this week?
3. Where do you fall on the Patient to Pushy continuum? In your relationships? With your kids?
4. How can you make a concentrated effort to let your children know you “take their side” even when it doesn’t boost your ego— this week?

