



EXODUS - WEEK 13

Parenting Tips From Moses

Opening prayer

Prayer for the persecuted church:

Prayer for a local church:

This morning we pray for our brother Chris Suitt and New Hope Church.

Closing prayer

Introduction:

- Parenting girls vs. parenting boys

The point is — there are ways to parent and there are ways not to parent. Today, as we

open chapter 13 of the book of Exodus, we're going to get some parenting tips from Moses, if by tips you means commandments.

Big Idea: Parenting is about discipleship.

What is discipleship? It's relational teaching through word and example.

Exodus 13:1-2

13 The Lord said to Moses, ² “Consecrate to me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine.” ³ Then Moses said to the people, “Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for by a strong hand the Lord brought you out from this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten... (end of verse ⁵ you shall keep this service in this month.)

Exodus 13:7-8

7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days; no leavened bread shall be seen with you, and no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory. 8 You shall tell your son on that day, ‘It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.’

1. Rituals (traditions) help us explain the gospel story to our children.

God gave them several traditions — Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the

consecration of the firstborn — and all of them tell the story of how God saved them.

As a matter of fact, the Exodus story teaches nearly every major Christian doctrine:

- sin & judgment (the plagues)
- election — God rescued the people of Israel not because they were worthy, but he saved them by His grace
- substitutionary atonement — they were saved by the blood of the lamb
- propitiation — God's wrath passed over them because of the blood

- **communion of saints — they shared the Passover meal together**
- **sanctification — leaven represents their old life and unleavened bread represents their new life**
- **and in this chapter redemption is taught**

This tradition helped them tell their children about the salvation of God. And these same traditions and stories can help us explain the gospel to our children:

Ephesians 1:7

7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,

“You shall tell your son...” Here’s where the programmatic church culture we have created fails us. Now, I’m going to say this gently, but it may sting some of you. “You shall tell your son... or your daughter...” In other words, you, the parent, tell your children the gospel.

You tell your children and traditions help you do that.

Now, that's just one of the ways we can explain the gospel to them, by making children aware of the communion service, baptism and what they both mean, even the Passover meal itself, etc.

The bottom-line is simply this: parents are the main disciplers of their children. I'm supplemental. A youth pastor is supplemental. A Sunday School teacher is supplemental.

But if we want to be real here, that's not how we treat it or think of it most of the time. And here's where our mindset comes back to haunt us sometimes. How many parents go to a church because (and I quote) "they have a dynamic children's ministry or youth ministry?" Even though the parents sit through the main service dissatisfied with the content of the preaching, somehow they think because of this "dynamic" children's ministry or youth ministry or whatever — that's what's

going to make the difference in whether or not their children follow Jesus.

Well, I can tell you right now that all many “dynamic” children’s ministry or youth ministry are doing (for the most part) is keeping your child amused. I know from experience that so much of youth ministry and children’s ministry is based upon primarily upon amusement. Now, please don’t misunderstand what I’m saying. I’m all for dynamic, but it goes back to what MLJ said which is basically if you’re gripped by what

you're saying they're not going to be gripped by what you're saying. The point is any ministry outside of the Christian home is only going to be supplemental.

- Mega Church Youth Group**

The discipleship of our children is a parenting issue, not a “what kind of programs do you have for the children” issue.

I have seen it far more often than I would like to admit — the child who attends the so-

called dynamic youth ministry who is now an adult and nowhere near the Christian faith.

So, that's the negative side effect of consumerism in the church. What's the positive? How can we do it differently? First, it takes courage to parent differently than the world, but what about specifics.

Well, the Bible doesn't actually give lots of parenting advice. The verses related directly to parenting we could actually cover in one sermon and that is not an exaggeration.

But what does the Bible teach us? How to follow Christ. Right? How to be a disciple. That's first. As a parent you have to follow Christ yourself. That's the primary thing. That's the big thing. From there, it's just the little things. The daily habits. The rituals and tradition of your family life and church life.

Saying grace before meals. Apologizing to your children when you're wrong. Bible reading before bed. Maybe a short little catechism during dinner.

The rest they will observe by the conversations you have and the things that are really important to you. Those things will tell them if your faith is real or not. And if they see that your faith is real (not that you're perfect) but that your faith is real and true and genuine, that will impact everything you teach them about Jesus.

It's discipleship — relational teaching through word and example. So, parenting is about discipleship.

9 And it shall be to you as a sign on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the law of the Lord may be in your mouth. For with a strong hand the Lord has brought you out of Egypt.

2. Discipleship is a lifestyle issue.

These are all basically lifestyle issues — touch, sight, speech. Your faith affects all these things. What you will touch, what you will allow your eyes to see, what comes out of

your mouth — all these things testify to your relationship with Jesus Christ.

¹⁰ You shall therefore keep this statute at its appointed time from year to year.

Routines are good. Traditions are good. Don't stop doing a tradition because your children complain about it.

¹¹ “When the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your fathers, and shall give it to you, ¹² you shall

set apart to the Lord all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your animals that are males shall be the Lord's. ¹³ Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem.

This is done every year, this ritual of redemption.

3. Discipleship must be consistent.

Here's a ritual that God gave them to remind them of their redemption, that they were saved from the bondage of Egypt by the blood of a lamb. And they explained this to their children every year.

A few things about this ritual:

- **The firstborn really represented the rest of the family, the way a captain of a team represents the rest of the team.**
- **It's like the principle of the tithe. They offered the first and the best to show the whole harvest belonged to God. To consecrate the firstborn was to show that everyone born of that family belonged to God. The firstborn was the representative the way Adam, the first man, was our representative.**

- And the firstborn had to be redeemed. To redeem is to buy back through the payment of a price. In this case, they had a substitute, because the price was death.

Here's what is basically being said. As you do these routines... as you attend church together as a family, as you pray together or attend Christmas eve services every year or the Easter sunrise services and all the other things that you do routinely as part of your faith in Christ, at some point your child will ask, "Why?" And our job is to tell them the

whys of the faith. Why did Jesus have to die for my sins? Why did He have to rise again from the dead? Why doesn't everyone love Jesus? Why do we sacrifice the first born lamb? And on and on...

¹⁴ And when in time to come your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' you shall say to him, 'By a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. ¹⁵ For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the Lord killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the

firstborn of animals. Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all the males that first open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.’¹⁶ It shall be as a mark on your hand or frontlets between your eyes, for by a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt.”

This tradition, this ritual, helps the parent give answers to the child’s questions. It’s also a way for you to share your own testimony. These traditions open up opportunities for discussion.

Psalm 78:4-7

- 4 We will not hide them from their children,
but tell to the coming generation
the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might,
and the wonders that he has done.**
- 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;**

Exodus 13:17

17 When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, “Lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt.”

4. Discipleship prepares your children for the real world.

God placed the Israelites in circumstances where they could not turn back. It's actually been determined that had the Israelites taken this other route, the short route, they could have reached the Promised Land in two-weeks. But God took them on a journey that lasted forty years in the wilderness. I find that comforting. Don't you ever look at your life and ask, "Why has it taken me so long to get here?" This is why — God has to take you

through things to prepare you for what He wants to do, to prepare you for what He has in store for you.

It's comforting to know that it's not just us, right? It's not just American culture. We want quick and easy. That's the foundation of consumerism. The consumer wants everything easy, quick, painless. Those are hallmarks of a technological mindset — easy, quick, immediate.

“In the United States, we suffer from a tragic lack of foresight. We operate with a “nowist” mindset, planning for the next few years of our lives more than any other timeframe... We too easily forget that what we do in the present could have serious consequences in the future.” (Amy Webb, *The Big Nine: How the Tech Titans and Their Thinking Machines Could Warp Humanity*)

Christians must cultivate a biblical mindset which is slow journey, which is agricultural — plowing up hard ground, making it fit to plant,

then planting, then tending the weeds, then losing an entire crop after all that hard work and beginning again and after doing it all over again, tending to the fields every day, keeping the crows and other predators away, so the crop will survive and reproduce.

We may not be farmers, but the Christian life is agricultural, not technological. And that doesn't mean there's anything wrong with technology. It just means that technology is not the right analogy for the walk of faith.

18 But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle.

He took them the long way to prepare them for battle. Discipleship is a long process. Be patient with those you're discipling, with your children.

You see, the Israelites recognized what they were walking into. Now, don't you just suppose that some of them during this little

jaunt, looked over and said, “Hmmm, I wonder why we’re not going that way? It seems shorter that way. I think if we go this way we’re gonna get into a... yeah, hand me a spear.”

When you know what you’re walking into, you can prepare for it. But you don’t know what the battle is like until you engage in it. But before you engage in battle, you have to be trained, you have to be prepared. That’s what discipleship does — it trains us for the battle.

19 Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for Joseph had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones with you from here.”²⁰ And they moved on from Succoth and encamped at Etham, on the edge of the wilderness. ²¹ And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. ²² The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.

5. God leads us in discipleship.

Psalm 32:8

**8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way
you should go;
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.**