

**Authority:** God calls us to live under authority. He is our authority and has vested authority in us as parents within the home. You must not be embarrassed to be authorities for your children. You exercise authority as God's agent. You may not direct your children for your own agenda or convenience. You must direct your children on God's behalf for their good. God calls you by his word and his example to be authorities who are kind. God calls you to exercise authority, not in making your children do what you want, but in being true servants- authorities who lay down their lives. The purpose for your authority in the lives of your children is not to hold them under your power, but to empower them to be self-controlled people living freely under the authority of God.

Jesus is our example of this. The one who commands you, the one who possesses all authority, came as a servant. He is a ruler who serves; He is also a servant who rules.

*Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

As a parent, you must exercise authority. You must require obedience of your children because they are called by God to obey and honor you. You must exercise authority, not as a cruel taskmaster, but as one who truly loves them.

**Shepherding:** If authority best describes the parent's relationship to the child, the best description of the activity of the parent to the child is shepherding. The parent is the child's guide. The shepherding process helps a child to understand himself and the world in which he lives. The parent shepherds a child to assess himself and his responses. He shepherds the child to understand not just the what of the child's actions but also the why. As the shepherd, you want to help your child understand himself as a creature made by and for God. You cannot show him these things merely by instruction; You must lead him on a path of discovery. You must shepherd his thoughts, helping him to learn discernment and wisdom.

This shepherding process is a richer interaction than telling your child what to do and think. It involves investing your life in your child in open and honest communication that unfolds the meaning and purpose of life. It is not simply direction, but direction in which there is self-disclosure and sharing. Values and spiritual vitality are not simply taught but caught.

*Proverbs 13:20 Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.*

As a wise parent your objective is not simply to discuss, but to demonstrate the freshness and vitality of life lived in integrity toward God and your family. Parenting is shepherding the hearts of your children in the ways of God's wisdom. Your child desperately needs to understand not only the external - what they did wrong, but also the internal - why they did it. You must help them see that God works from the inside out. Therefore, your parenting goal cannot simply be well behaved children. Your children must also understand why they sin and how to recognize internal change. This is gospel parenting. In the gospel there is the promise of internal transformation and empowerment. The gospel enables you and your children to face the worst in yourselves- your sin, your badness and your weakness and still find hope because grace is powerful.

## **Your child has 2 broad sets of issues that affect him daily:**

- 1- The child and his relationship to the shaping influences of life.
- 2- The child and his relationship to God.

Shaping influences are those events and circumstances in a child's developmental years that proved to be a catalyst for making him the person he is. But the shaping is not automatic; The ways he responds to these events and circumstances determine the effect they have upon him.

*Proverbs 29:21 A servant pampered from youth will turn out to be insolent (thankless, disrespectful).*

The person your child becomes is a product of two things. The 1st is his life experience. The second is how he interacts with that experience. Is not merely acted upon by the circumstances of life. He reacts. He responds according to the godward orientation of his heart.

### **Shaping influences:**

Structures of family life

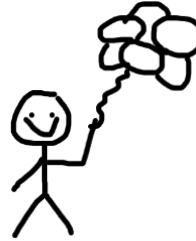
Family values

Family roles

Family response to failure

Family history

Family conflict resolution



What are some prominent shaping influences in your child's life?  
What is the structure of your family? How has it affected your child?  
What would your child identify as the values of your family?  
What are the things that matter most?  
Who is the boss in your home?  
What are the patterns of conflict resolution?  
What constitutes success or failure in your home?  
What events have been pivotable in your family history?  
How have these patterns affected your children? You?

**Shaping influences are not deterministic:** Your child is not a helpless victim of their circumstances in which he is raised. But also, don't deny shaping influences. It is a mistake to say your child is unaffected by his childhood experience. It is a big mistake to conclude that child rearing is nothing more than providing the best possible shaping influences. Many parents adopt this Christian determinism. They think that if they can protect and shelter their child well enough, always be positive with him, if they can send him to Christian schools or home school, or provide the best childhood experience, their child will turn out great. Children are not passive receivers of shaping. They are active responders. Your son or daughter responds according to the godward focus of his or her life. If your child knows and loves God, if your child has embraced the fact that knowing God can enable him to know peace in any circumstances, then he will respond constructively to your shaping efforts. If your child does not know and love God but tries to satisfy his soul's thirst "drinking from a cistern that cannot hold water" (Jer. 2:13), your child may rebel against your best efforts. You must do all that God has called you to do but the outcome is more complex than whether you have done the right things in the right way. Your children are responsible for the way they respond to your parenting.

*Proverbs 4:23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.*

**Shepherding responsible children:** One of our goals in parenting is to raise children who accept responsibility for themselves and for their actions. We want them to be reliable and conscientious in their duties and to be honest enough to admit their failures and weaknesses. Children who grow up

without learning personal responsibility are not prepared for adulthood and will inevitably find themselves causing grief to all those who rely upon them.

### **Basic attributes of responsible people:**

1. They believe it is their duty to provide for themselves
  - unless forgiven a debt they fill it as their obligation to pay their own bills
  - they do not expect others to assume responsibility for them
  - they do not feel entitled to that for which they have not worked
2. They are faithful and conscientious in duties
  - they have a strong sense of obligation to fulfill their duties; Do not stop until a job is complete.
  - they have personal integrity; Can be trusted to do what they say
  - they are self-disciplined- not ruled by laziness or desire for pleasure
3. They accept blame for their mistakes and will not shift it to others
  - they accept accountability for their actions
  - they don't make excuses or project guilt to others
  - they do not view themselves as victims blaming others for their own poor choices, they hold no one else responsible for their reactions; They can endure insults and inconsideration
  - they are honest enough to admit failures and weaknesses
4. They have awareness of their obligations
  - they are clear about their commitments and strive to fulfill them in a timely manner.
5. They adapt
  - They are flexible and adjust to changing circumstances effectively.
6. They have problem-solving skills
  - They proactively address challenges and find solutions.

In the name of “devotion” some parents protect their children from the consequences of their actions- they *coddle (pamper, indulge)* them. Coddled children grow up irresponsible and dependent upon others to take care of them. Then the parent will ask “*where did we go wrong? We did everything we could to give them a happy childhood.*”

Parents raise irresponsible or unappreciated children by doing everything they can to make them happy. In an attempt to give them a fulfilling childhood and they failed to give them a more significant experience of taking responsibility for themselves.

### **Tips for teaching children to assume responsibility for themselves**

Do not do for your children that which they need to do for themselves.

- If they dirty something they must clean it.
- If they leave a door open, they must go back and close it.
- If they leave something on, they must turn it off.
- If they leave a chore and finished or probably done, they must redo it until it is properly done. Do not do it for them no matter how much you fear it will not ever be done right.
- If they break something they must pay for it. If they're too young to have money they must assist the parent in its repair or attempt to purchase of a new one. They already give them a deadline for payment and don't lead them by the hand to find the means of earning the money.
- If they are expected to pay for a new toy themselves do not back down and make up the difference. Let them save a little longer.
- If they make an unwise decision or make a foolish purchase let them live with their choices.
- If they get in trouble with the law do not bail them out.
- If they use illegal drugs do not give them a “safe place” to use.

## **How to avoid coddling children**

To coddle children is to cripple them by assuming responsibility for that which belongs just to them. Parents coddle because it comes from the heart and feels compassionate. Yet, it keeps kids irresponsible, immature and entitled. Consequently, many coddled children grow up with a victim mentality, viewing life from the perspective, *“my problems are someone else’s fault – someone needs to rescue me.”*

- Do not wake your child up daily when they are old enough to set an alarm, or you will create dependance.
- If your child does not bring adequate money for an outing, don’t bail them out.
- Do not do their homework for them.
- Do not always give them a second chance when they continually fail to comply with standards. If they always clean their room to a sloppy standard, they know you will step in and do the rest. If their first effort at math is weak, because they know that you will simply do the rest for them.
- Do not state for them, time after time, the established guidelines for chores and standards for behavior.
- Do not give them constant reminders to do their duties. It causes them to grow dependent upon you to remember their responsibilities and inhibits the development of independence and self-reliance.

The fundamental principle is that a child should be held responsible to do everything he is capable of doing as young as possible.

## **Teach your child throughout life a biblical view of work**

1. Work is part of God’s big picture.
2. Our actual work matters to God, now and eternally. God has chosen to create men and women in His image to, among other things, work and tend this created order for His glory and for the betterment of humankind.
3. God provides us with unique skills, gifts and talents, and calls us to roles and activities. Although the roles might have apparent differences in importance, our callings are equal. They are a spiritual calling. There are no second-class callings from God.
4. Quality, character, and ethics are foundational for our work. We are responsible not only for the quality of our work, but also for our faithfulness to God in the way we pursue that work, and for our own good character while working. We will be judged and rewarded accordingly.
5. Our work is yoked with Christ. We should work as if yoked to Jesus Christ.
6. Our work should be centered on service to others. Our work is an opportunity to seek the peace and well-being of others. Humility and gratitude should be the hallmark of our character. We should always acknowledge God in our work and consider that being an ambassador for Him is a weighty, but honored, responsibility.
7. A rhythm of work and rest is essential to life. God invites us into a deliberate pattern of regular rest. Seek to exemplify a happy rhythm of both.
8. Work is a gift from God. We should always acknowledge that work is a gift from God, as is our ability to be happy in it.

## **Developing responsibility and good work habits:**

- Adulthood brings with it tremendous responsibility that many teenagers are not prepared. The demands of life are difficult, and many find it difficult to get the hang of, so they fail in job, finances and relationships.
- It is the parents' responsibility to prepare children to successfully handle launching into adult life. Children must assume adult responsibilities in their teenage years.
- Children must learn young that life is about responsibility – not idle gratification and pleasure.
- The sooner a child learns responsibility the sooner they mature.
- Schedule weekly and daily chores
- Give them responsibilities compatible to their age capabilities.
- The goal of giving any responsibility young is so that when they get to be a teenager, they will more than succeed in whatever they do.
- A child should be held responsible to do everything he is capable of doing as young as possible. A 12-month-old can pick up toys. A 7-year-old can do their own laundry. Etc.
- Reject the idea that it is the mother's job to do all the work in the home. It is the duty of both parents to train the children to be responsible.
- Do not tolerate bad attitudes about work. If they regularly complain, it is likely that they are not yet used to work as a normal part of life. They have developed a worldview around their own pleasure. Bad attitudes will slowly disappear once their worldview adjusts to reality.
- Motivate the development of work skills by offering simple rewards for work well done.
- Increase work privileges can be tremendously incentive for good work habits. Jesus did teach that he who is faithful in little is entrusted with much. Mat. 25:21
- Teach them a work motto and have them occasionally repeat it, *"Work hard, work fast, don't stop, look for more."*
- Do not pay them for fulfilling their duty to their family (Luke 17:7-10). Do not pay to watch their own siblings. Family looks after family. They wash dishes because they dirty them. They vacuum the carpet because they dirty it. They carry firewood because they are warmed by it. If you want to give them spending money, do so because they are faithful members of the family. Pay them for jobs you can hire out.

## **The results of hard work**

Most parents find that children who grumble in line when they are first learning to work eventually discover a great satisfaction in a job well done. Children raised to work hard as a normal part of life find it easier to launch in adulthood responsibilities.

- Our joy is full when we actively serve others – John 15:10-12
- We grow in maturity when we endure "suffering." The challenge of hard work certainly qualifies as suffering. Hebrews 2:10; 5:8-9
- Youthful diligence bears lasting fruit. Prov. 13:4; Prov 10:4

If we overindulge our children with a consistent diet of fun, our children will learn to equate joy with only fun.