



PARENTING

EPHESIANS 6:1-4



Pastor Doug Keen

CCBF PARENTING COURSE

Genesis 1:28 “Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.”

The first social institution that God ever created was not a nation, state, town, or even a church. It was a marriage. God created Adam and Eve, brought them together as husband and wife, and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28). Therefore, from the beginning we see that one of God’s main purposes for marriage is to have children. It is within the context of marriage that children are to be raised to maturity.

That is what this course is all about. We want to instruct you in God’s Word to equip you to raise your children to maturity. God is the only expert Parent and His Word has very clear instructions for parents. Therefore, we will focus on what God’s Word has to say about parenting and how to apply it to your lives.

This course has three classes. Class 1 covers Parenting Goals, Defining Success, Parenting Dangers, and the Impact Of Your Personal Relationship With Jesus. Class 2 covers Practical Parenting as we study Ephesians 6:4 - “training and admonition”. Class 3 is a study of Ephesians 6:1-3 and covers The Importance Of Teaching Our Children To Obey Us, How To Keep Them In The Place Of Blessing, Biblical Discipline, and How To Keep Going When Things Are Hard.

Now a special note to single parents. Welcome! Being a parent can be challenging. Being a single parent can be really challenging. But God is with you and will help you be the best parent you can be. We fully support you in your desire to be one.

Be strong and courageous,
Pastor Doug Keen
Calvary Chapel Bible Fellowship

CLASS 1

Psalm 127:3-5 “Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one’s youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; They shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with their enemies in the gate.”

Let's begin by answering the following questions.

- 1. What are your goals as a parent?**
- 2. How much control do you have over the outcome of those goals?**
- 3. What do you think God requires of you as a parent?**
- 4. How do you measure success as a parent?**

What Is Successful Parenting?

Surely the greatest desire of Christian parents is that their children are saved from sin and walk with God. God has saved us and we want the same for our children.

But how much control do we have over achieving that goal? As much as we may want to, we cannot make our kids believe, love God, or walk with Him. They must decide to do that for themselves. John 1:12 (NIV) “Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”

What does God require of us as Christian parents? Simply put, obedience, that is, knowing God’s Word and doing it. When we stand before the Lord we want to hear these words, “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21). That won’t be based on how our children respond to us or to the gospel, but rather on how we obey God as parents. Therefore, being a successful parent in God’s eyes is simply doing what He says.

Four Parenting Dangers To Avoid

In your desire to be a faithful and obedient Christian parent, here are some parenting dangers to avoid.

#1 Condemnation

Romans 8:1 “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.”

There is only One perfect Parent: God. The rest of us have all failed, and some of us have failed badly. Satan, the “accuser of the brethren” (Revelation 12:10), wants to condemn you for your parenting failures. Don’t listen to him! If you have failed, confess it to God, seek forgiveness from your children or spouse, and move on (1 John 1:9). But don’t live in condemnation.

If you sin as a Christian parent, the Holy Spirit convicts you. But how can you know the difference between the conviction of the Holy Spirit and the condemnation of the Devil? The conviction of the Holy Spirit drives you to God for forgiveness and cleansing, but the condemnation of the Devil drives you away from God. If you're in Christ then God no longer condemns you. So I repeat, don't listen to Satan's condemnations! Remember Romans 8:1.

#2 Comparison

2 Corinthians 10:12 "For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise."

When you look around at other Christian parents it is wise to follow good examples and to learn from the mistakes of others. However, it is not wise to compare yourself to other parents. If you do, you'll either be prideful that you have done better than them, or you will be depressed that you have done worse. Remember, successful parenting is simply doing what God wants you to do, it's not about doing better than others. Avoid the comparison trap!

#3 Cowardice

2 Timothy 1:7 "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

You can be a good parent! God made no mistake when He made you a parent, and He has provided all you need to be successful by His Word, His Spirit, and the fellowship of the church. So take the time, make the effort, be involved, and stay engaged with your children. The world and the Devil want to ruin your kid's lives, but God wants to use you to raise them to maturity and teach them about Him, and He has given you the authority and ability to do it. So man-up, or woman-up, and do it!

#4 Confidence in Parenting “Formulas”

James 1:5 “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”

Some Christian parents think if they follow a particular program, parenting book, video series, or do the exact same thing another parent does then their kid will surely become a Christian. They think if they can control all the inputs, then the results will be inevitable. But there is no foolproof formula or cookie-cutter approach to successful parenting. Each child is different, family dynamics are different, and circumstances often change. God wants you to obey His Word and then pray continually for wisdom. He will give you wisdom to adapt your parenting skills to each child, family dynamic, and circumstance in life.

What about Proverbs 22:6? “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” Doesn’t that guarantee our child will become a Christian if we are good parents? Remember this is a proverb (true-ism) not a promise. While it is true that the way you raise your kids has a massive impact on them and sets a course for their lives, they have their own free will and must choose to believe in Christ themselves. Again, our responsibility as parents is to simply be faithful to train our children in God’s ways. It is their responsibility to respond in obedience (Ephesians 6:1-4), and to believe the gospel at the age of accountability.

The Impact Of Your Personal Relationship With Jesus On Your Children

Your personal walk with Jesus has a tremendous impact on your children as they see the character of Jesus in your life and see how you follow Him daily. Your children are watching you. You are showing them daily what you value, what your priorities are, and how much you love God. You do this two ways - **1. By your Personal Devotion, and 2. By your Personal Example.**

1. Personal Devotion

Your personal devotions are times when you get alone with God to read His Word and pray. It's when you find a quiet time, in a quiet place, to meet with Him all alone or with your spouse. The purpose is to get to know God better, and to spend time in His presence. He died for you to have a relationship with you, so when you do this you're giving Him what He desires, namely you! Here are some tips on how to have Personal Devotions.

Spend time daily with God in His Word

Read **Psalm 1**. What does the "Blessed Man" do? What does he not do? What are the blessings of the "Blessed Man"?

We encourage you to have a regular reading plan. There are many to choose from. For instance, you can download the Blue Letter Bible app and find several to choose from. The point is to be systematic in your Bible reading. Don't just pick it up at random and read a sentence or two, and then jump to another place in the Bible. A farmer who wants to maximize his harvest will plow furrows side by side and systematically plant seeds into them. Read each book from beginning to end and as you go along answer the questions: 1. What does this say? 2. What does this mean? 3. How does this apply to my life? This is called the Inductive Study Method and it is the one we recommend at CCBF.

Spend time daily with God in prayer

Your personal private prayer life is a good indicator of your spiritual life. It shows that you know you can't do anything without God. You are completely dependent on Him. You're not doing it to impress anyone because no one but God even hears you.

Read about Jesus' prayer life in **Luke 3:21, 5:16, 6:12, 9:18, 9:28-29, 10:21, 11:1, 22:31-32, 22:41-44, 23:34, 23:46.**

Notice where and when Jesus prayed. Follow Jesus' example in prayer and you will be close to God. And we encourage you to pray for your kids every day. **James 4:2** "Yet you do not have because you do not ask."

2. Personal Example

Your kids will follow your example more than your words. See what Paul wrote the Corinthian believers. **1 Corinthians 4:14-16** "I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me." **1 Corinthians 11:1** "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ." Imitate me. Follow my example.

See what James the half-brother of Jesus wrote. **James 2:18** "Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works." To paraphrase James, "Real faith produces a changed life. You say you have faith but you don't have works to prove it. I will show you my faith by the works that I do." That's the power of a personal example. In all this we remember that this isn't something we do of our own strength. Philippians 2:13 tells us God is working in us both to will and to do what He asks. Here's a simple way to remember four steps to help us with our example:

Amen. Pray every day

Bible. Read the Bible every day

Church. Regularly attend and serve at a Bible teaching and Spirit filled church

Disciple. Tell others about what Jesus has done for them.

Husbands and Wives:

Read **Ephesians 5:21-33**. God wants your marriage to teach your kids about the love that Jesus has for His Bride, the Church, by the love and respect you have for one another. The breakdown of marriages in our culture has been the biggest contributing factor to kids not growing to maturity. Your marriage has a tremendous impact on your kids, so focus on making it great.

Single Parents:

You are not alone. God is with you, and your church family is with you. We encourage you to trust God to work in your kids' lives. Jesus said in **John 14:21**, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." Notice His promise: If you love and obey Him, He will "manifest" (reveal) Himself to you. Therefore if you want the presence of Jesus in your home, touching your life and the lives of your kids, then remember this promise and do it.

Also, look at **1 Corinthians 7:14**, "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy." Though this is not strictly speaking of single parents, there is a biblical principle that applies to you. In a marriage with only one believing spouse, the unbelieving spouse and the children are "sanctified" or "holy" because of the influence of the believing spouse. This doesn't mean that they are automatically saved, but they are set apart for spiritual blessing because of the influence of the believing spouse. The same is true for a single parent. Your kids are blessed by God because of you. It's like you're raising a spiritual umbrella over your kids and everyone under it is blessed because of you.

To All Parents:

Here is a good example for all parents to follow. **Joshua 24:15** "And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." No matter what paths other people chose to walk, Joshua was determined to lead His family in God's ways. May you have the same determination!

CLASS 2

In this class we are going to look at Practical Parenting as we study

Ephesians 6:4

Read **Ephesians 6:4**. You can “provoke your children to wrath” by ignoring them, abusing them, setting standards too high for them, being too busy for them, embarrassing them, or over-disciplining them.

Note two aspects of parenting: **1. Training:** Greek paidaia, Training With Actions; Walking the Talk. **2. Admonition:** Greek nouthesia, Training With Words; Talking the Walk.

1. Training With Actions: Walking the Talk

Read **Joshua 4:1-7**. God commanded the Israelites to place memorial stones on the banks of the Jordan River so they could teach their children about what God had done for them. It was a physical action that taught children a spiritual lesson.

Here are some practical examples of how to train your kids with actions.

Family Devotions

“Let’s read the Bible while you’re eating breakfast.” “Let’s pray for your teachers and classmates.” “Let’s read the Bible and pray before you go to sleep.” “Son, would you lead us in prayer tonight?”

Make Church A Priority

“Kids, this is what we do as a family. Other families may do other things on Sundays, but God is most important to us.” Read **Hebrews 10:24-25**.

Question:

What about sports on Sunday mornings?

Answer:

Is there an evening service to go to? Be careful of compromise. Your actions will send a message to your kids what your values are.

Giving

"Kids, please put this envelope in the tithe box, but try not to let anyone see you do it. Here's why." Then read Matthew 6:1-5.

Serving Others

"Can you help me bake this cake for church?" "Can you help me fill this box with gifts to send to poor children?"

Witnessing

If you make this a way of life, your kids will ask you: "Why do you always give out Bible tracts?" "What were you saying to that man?" "Why were you praying with that woman?" "Did they receive Jesus?"

Chores

It teaches them personal responsibility and being faithful in the little things so they can be made rulers over greater things.

Share Communion As A Family

Explain what it means. Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 and then take it together.

Stairway to Heaven

I heard of a man who wanted to teach his two little kids about the grace of God. So he took them to the bottom of the stairs and said, "I'll buy you an ice-cream cone if you can make it to the top of the stairs without touching the stairs or the walls." They thought and thought but couldn't come up with any ideas. Eventually one of them tried jumping but only got to the third step.

Finally they said, “Dad, we can’t do it. It’s impossible.” So he said, “Why didn’t you ask me?” Then he bent down, picked them up and climbed the stairs, much to their delight. After they reached the top he took the opportunity to explain how Jesus did something similar for us. “We could never make it to heaven by our own works, so Jesus came down and died for us on the cross, that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have everlasting life.” And then he bought them ice-cream!

Can you think of other examples?

2. Training With Words: Talking the Walk

Read **Deuteronomy 6:6-7**. In all places, at all times, use every teachable moment to speak with your kids about God. Make it enjoyable. Don’t force it down their throats. But take every opportunity you can to teach them about God.

Here are some practical examples of how to train your kids with words.

Bible Reading

You can do it in the morning before school or in the evening before bed. If they’re young, keep it simple and short. As they get older, you can take turns reading and talking about it.

Pray Together

At devotions and throughout the day. When they are young, keep it simple and short. As they get older, you can ask them to pray together with you and for you, and you can ask them to pray before some meals.

Talk About Sunday School Or Pastor's Sermon

"How did the Lord speak to you?" "What did you learn about God?" "Do you have any questions?" "How do you think the kids at your school would answer the question Jesus asked his disciples?" "That message really spoke to my heart. Here's why..."

Encourage Scripture Memorization

Read **Psalm 119:11**. Don't push them. Make it fun. You can even reward them for it - \$\$\$.

Pray For Wisdom To Ask Good Questions

As kids get older they don't like monologues so try to ask open-ended questions. "Tell me about your day today?" "What are your dreams in life?" "I heard about that boy in your school who died. That's so sad. How are you feeling about that?" Get to know what they think, feel, and value. Don't be too quick to judge or bring a correction. Keep the lines of communication open. It's amazing how God will use you to speak truth into their lives when you ask a simple question and just listen.

Discuss Current Events

Watch a video, movie, or news and discuss it. "What do your friends think of that?" "How about you?"

Can you think of other examples?

CLASS 3

In this class, we are going to look at the importance of teaching our children to obey us, how to keep them in the place of blessing, biblical discipline, and how to keep going when things are hard.

Read **Ephesians 6:1-3**.

6:1 It's "right" that our children obey us because it 1. Honors God, 2. Blesses our children, and 3. Blesses us.

Notice the condition in this command: **"obey your parents in the Lord"**. If we are commanding our kids to do something against the will of God then they must disobey us in order to obey God. So as parents, let's be sure that we are obeying God ourselves.

6:2-3. Paul quotes the 5th Commandment from Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16. It is the first of the Ten Commandments with a promise, **"that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."** This was a promise to Israel under the Law. God was showing the importance of the family, the God-given authority of parents, and the responsibility of children to obey them. There was a God-given chain of command: God > parents > children. When children obeyed their parents, they obeyed God, and they would be blessed.

The same principle applies to children today. This doesn't guarantee that obedient children will live a long life. We've known obedient children who have died young. But God promises a spiritual blessing to children who obey their parents

And again, just as with us, when our children have a relationship with God, He is at work in them to help them in obedience both to Him and to us (Philippians 2:13)..

The Circle Of Blessing

The picture of the “Circle of Blessing” comes from author Ted Tripp in his book *Shepherding A Child’s Heart*. When children obey their parents they are inside the “Circle of Blessing.” Inside it “goes well”. Outside it doesn’t go well, and children need discipline to go back inside. We will look at how to do this practically under “Loving Discipline.”



Loving Discipline

Read **Hebrews 12:3-10**. Who disciplines us? Is it loving or unloving? Who does God not discipline? Is discipline pleasant? What does it produce?

Practical ways to discipline your children.

Verbal Correction

"You should not have done that. I want you to do this..."

Time out

Sit on steps/corner/etc for 5/10min. Not play time.

Loss of privilege

Friend's visit, screen time, buying a toy, etc.

Restitution

"I will pay for your friend's toy that you broke but you will have to do three hours of chores to pay me back." "I want you to write your teacher a letter and tell her that you were wrong and ask her to forgive you."

Spanking: Proverbs 13:24, 22:15, 23:13-14 (NLT), 29:15

- **Why?** The purpose of physical discipline is to cause physical discomfort to reinforce that breaking rules has consequences. The temporary discomfort from a parent's correction should be less severe than the consequences from the world. Since every child is different, exercise extreme caution when physically disciplining your child. Consider your convictions and discernment when choosing how to discipline.
- **What?** Rod - symbol of authority. Ensure you cannot cause physical harm to your child.
- **When?** Be wise. This is a physical discipline and should only be considered for the correction of willful disobedience.

- **How many?** The least amount possible - usually one will do.
Communicate the number with the child ahead of time (helpful to them, safe for you) and stick to that.
- **DO NOT VENT RAGE ON YOUR CHILD.** Spanking is not abuse. If you're a hot-headed person, you need to physically get away from your child, calm down, and pray for self-control and wisdom before disciplining your child. Done lovingly, discipline works for your child's good. Done in anger and you will make things worse. Remember James 1:19-20 "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God."
- **Failed?** There's grace. Got a problem? Get help now. You are not yet fit to discipline your child.

Keep On Track

Parenting can be hard work. It requires commitment, energy, perseverance, vigilance, patience, and love. It is not quick work. It is like running a marathon. You need determination and stamina over a long period of time.

But it is worth it. God wants to use you to teach your children about Him and to train them to be mature godly adults. What an honor it is to be a parent! And what a responsibility it is!

So keep on track. Don't give up. Don't quit. Here's how you do that. **Hebrews 12:1-2** says, "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Keep your eyes on Jesus. He will strengthen you, encourage you, equip you, guide you, and guard you as you parent your children. Look to Jesus for everything you need.

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