

Three principles for parenting

1. PRESENT, NOT PERFECT

2. PARENTING IN GOD'S IMAGE – Grace Based Parenting

3. PARENTING IN ALL STAGES OF LIFE– PRINCIPLES FOR PARENTING WITH PERSPECTIVE

The foundation for good parenting is found in the sacred order.

Sacred order -it's important for you as a couple to live in harmony with the sacred order

When you live outside the sacred order, you invite potential conflict into your relationship

Husband

Provider

Protector

Pastor

Wife

Nurturer

Helper

Builder of the home (the Holy Spirit of the home) – helping develop and sustain the culture of the home

THREE PRINCIPLES FOR PARENTING

“GOD HAS HARD WIRED INTO ALL OF US THE NEED FOR A SECURE LOVE, A SIGNIFICANT PURPOSE AND A STRONG HOPE. HE HAS CHOSEN PARENTHOOD AS THE VEHICLE

TO TRANSFER THESE NEEDS TO YOUR CHILDRENS HEARTS.”

1. AS PARENTS, WE ARE CALLED TO BE “PRESENT”, not “PERFECT”

Our calling is to be faithful. Our calling is not to be perfect but present. That points to our being available and active in the job of parenting. We are going to make mistakes. The easiest way to avoid mistakes is not to be involved. To wash your hands of a situation and just say, “that is someone else’s deal.”

Our goal is to raise a child that can function as an emotionally and spiritually mature adult and make a contribution to society

Deuteronomy 6:4-7 “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons 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 up.

Proverbs 22:6 - Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is older he will not depart from it.

These two references point at us being involved. So being present means being involved even if you make mistakes and taking responsibility for the process. Because when you do this, you are MODELING what it means to be a parent for your children in every kind of way.

Modeling: Modeling is so critical as a parent. Your children are relying on you to show them the way.

B. MODELING IS A LIFE LONG EXERCISE.

As a father, one of the most important things I get to do is to show my boys the way to live. Now, they are all grown men. They have their own lives. They have wives, children, houses and careers. They don't really need me for anything. One thing I think we got across to them pretty clearly was to believe, "If its to be, it's up to me."

They don't lack motivation when it comes to work or rolling up their sleeves. Our oldest son is as frugal as it gets. Our youngest son is the top DIY guy of his brothers and his father. He fixed his dishwasher and put on a new roof on his storage shed – by himself. What's the difference between a musician and a large pizza. The pizza can feed a family of four.

So, they are independent. But one thing they do need? They need me to show them the way. They need to see a man who is walking out the years of his life trusting God, wrestling with sin, admitting when he is wrong and pointing to God as His true joy and life.

One day I will need to show them how to die. And die well.

So they know what to do and how it should look.

Modeling is a lifelong exercise.

KATHY: Also along the way, modeling to our children is

Sharing Christ with them and exhibiting our own commitment to Christ:

What does that look like?

Walking in life by faith (looks like: reading our bibles, serving in our local church body,

Representing Christ well in culture at large

Demonstrating to them our dependence on God in struggles through prayer

God is a God of order - giving them the building blocks of life
 Establishing a routine and rhythm establishes the priority of God in your family life (God operates in order not chaos; routine and rhythm in your family life gives your children a sense of security, rest and peacefulness – a settledness in their spirit)

Time apart every day – allows for self discovery b/c in boredom they have to figure out how to be content while alone and builds independence; encourages creativity; helps them learn problem solving early in life and builds resilience by adapting, trying difference things, calming themselves.

JEFF

Pray with your little ones consistently – morning or evening (tell how we used to come together at night and asked what they were thankful for; and any “specials” and sometimes sharing the gospel during these times.

2. PARENTING IN GOD’S IMAGE

GRACE BASED PARENTING

KATHY:

GIVING YOUR CHILD A SECURE LOVE:

Children do best growing up in an environment of grace- this looks like a place that is a safe, welcoming space where your children can feel accepted, where forgiveness is offered and apologies made and accepted. Remember modeling? Which includes us apologizing when we may have not handled something well. Where discipline is about correction and free from harsh judgment. Instead of measuring their worth by performance or perfection this atmosphere values relationships, kindness, respect for one another and open honesty, allowing them and yourselves to make mistakes, to heal and leave room for growth.

Some ways to accomplish:

DON'T MAJOR ON THE MINORS – fads, crazy ideas, dress and hair styles, particular secular music (some dress and music may require your discretion)

Don't make mountains out of molehills.

PARENT TO THE INSIDE NOT TO THE OUTSIDE: Be more concerned with what's going on in their heart not just outward behavior. Correct things like, disrespect, lying, selfishness, deceitfulness; push them to rely on God to help them grow in these areas and give them some tools to help them grow. Don't correct silliness or things that may be embarrassing. Recognize their uniqueness created by God.

Where in the younger years you are building principles and the use of "because I said so" is valid, as they get older, now you begin to have more dialogue with your kids and allow them to share when there are struggles/conflicts.

Listen to them – let them share what may be the reason for their Misbehavior. This shows them you respect them.

- Discuss consequences for actions together with your kids
Make the consequence fit the misbehavior – God disciplines because He loves us and it is not harsh. Don't make unreasonable consequences.

JEFF: Correction – deals with growth of the inside; helping them to see it is a heart issue; need for repentance b/c all sin is against Him;

Punishment is the idea of inflicting pain and felt consequences with the attitude of payback.. It is more harsh and main concern is to stop the bad behavior. More important that opportunity for growth and teaching.

JEFF:

HELP THEM SEE THEY HAVE A SIGNIFICANT PURPOSE

God put them here for a purpose – mainly to walk humbly with him and make Him known.

If we want to understand their purpose, how God wants to use them, then you it helps to know your children.

- Know them – their abilities and interests; what areas physically, emotionally, and intellectually they are strong in and those where they may be weak.
- Coach them in their weaknesses so they can grow.
- Encourage them. If you affirm the good things you see in them emotionally - how they interact with friends, siblings, their strong physical and intellectual skills – you will develop their confidence in who they are and the purpose they will have.
- Look for things they stand out at; things that get them excited and fulfilled; things that others notice – ALL THESE THINGS WILL POINT AT THE PURPOSE THAT GOD HAS FOR THEM

III. When your child has a **SENSE OF PURPOSE**, then that leads to them **HAVING A STRONG HOPE**.

Hope for all of us is believing that life is worth living and a life without purpose is a life without hope.

If our children can realize that they are accepted, that they can be forgiven, that they have things they are good at and that contribute to the lives of others, they will have HOPE. Hope in God and His purpose for them.

They will have hope when they feel loved by you and they discover and hold onto purpose. This a huge gift that you transfer into the hearts of your kids.

JEFF:

One of the goals of good GRACE BASED PARENTING is the idea of.....

Developing a great emotional vocabulary:

What do we mean by that? Having a healthy emotional vocabulary is the skill to know your heart, understand the conflict that comes from negative emotions you feel and allowing God to teach you why you are feeling those negative emotions. The more your children understand WHAT they are feeling and WHY they are feeling those things, the better they will be able to be OBJECTIVE ABOUT THEIR EMOTIONS:

When you can be OBJECTIVE, you can put things in their proper place. If you are SUBJECTIVE, you are focused on you and solely on WHAT you are feeling, not on WHY you are feeling it.

If you are 40 years old, you have probably grown a good bit in your ability to understand and handle your emotions.

But if you are 7 years old or 13, you probably don't have the ability to fully articulate and tell your parents what feel inside. But, believe me, they would love to tell you exactly what they are feeling inside.

Teaching your child the chance to express themselves and tell you about their innermost feelings – to be in a place of trust with you is a grace based response to them.

They learn that they can tell you anything, in any way and you will love them, and care for them, and do your best to help them sort things out.

KATHY: So how do we give them that skill? What can we do as parents to help them have confidence in sharing how they feel inside with us?

Go back to the environment of grace. Here are some ways that show grace towards them.

- Accept them as uniquely created by God. May have annoying behaviors that embarrass you at times. That's okay. This should not be disciplined.
- Be kind to them; respect them – their time, ideas, interests (story about leaving in 5 minutes)
- invest in them even it is sacrificial for you sometimes (time at the job, gym with your own outside interests, etc.) engage with them and their world
- Loads of affection even as they get older. Touch is so important even if it is just a pat on the head or back (most teenagers will not want big hugs, but still touch)
 - Still stick with a routine as much as possible. They are starting to get involved with extracurricular outside of school.
 - Family dinners may be difficult but strive to have them as much as possible.
 - Maybe a particular night or weekend day declare no phone zone and everyone put down their phones and have some time together. What putting phones down will enhance: Imagination (creating their own entertainment),
 - Patience (learn to wait “I may want something but I can wait for it)
 - Social Skills (actually being in person together you learn how to communicate, compromise, etc.),
 - Observation (enjoying things they encounter in nature), Responsibility (learn to contribute and learn they are capable and part of something bigger- like the family)

- At dinner ask them what “**What was a great thing that happened today**” and “**What was a something that bummed you out?**”
- Help them begin their own quiet times – study with them (Playbook)

These things will show your children that you care and then they will more likely feel comfortable in coming to you to share things they struggle with or what’s on their heart. Don’t be surprised if they times of sharing are inconvenient (bedtime). Just roll with it!

3. PARENTING IN ALL STAGES OF LIFE

JEFF: BRIDGE: As Kathy mentioned when they are young, you parent more from a position of authority. When you do that, you are setting the foundation for their understanding of God and His authority in all our lives. As they get older, your parenting style has to be more flexible and allow them to directly understand how they fit into God’s world as they make their own decisions.

I. IF YOU ARE LIKE KATHY AND I, we have found that sometimes we are actually a little behind the curve instead of ahead of the curve in terms of changing our parenting style. We’d like to think that we are on top of it but the truth is, you and I are growing in our parenting skill at the same time that our children are growing up and changing. We are learning just like them, so its really important to acknowledge to ourselves and to our children that we don’t have all the answers.

As our children got older one thing that God has done for us is teaching us how important it is that we have a **learning posture about parenting**. Particularly when your children get into their teens and beyond, you will naturally give them more and more freedom and see them making and owning their decisions.

FREEDOM TO MAKE CHOICES – give them more rope – *relate story of personal freedom for our sons in high school and our ground rules for life*

II. Why you can't always rely on your principles, experience and wisdom

JEFF: Relate the stories of parenting our adult children through marriage conflicts and changes in our relationship.

(RELATE ABOUT TWO MARRIAGE CRISIS' IN OUR FAMILY AND HOW THAT AFFECTED US)

Talk about how we often found ourselves relying on ourselves rather than God in how we navigate the difficulties in those relationships.

But sometimes as we looked at their decisions, we have found ourselves thinking, '**have you lost your mind?**' And then thinking, now that we are not panicking anymore and our blood pressure has gotten below 170/90, "OK we have the answer to this one. We've got this. Let's provide some guidance and help them figure this out."

All of us have **PRINCIPLES, EXPERIENCE AND WISDOM.**

We know the principles we want to live by.

We have tested those **PRINCIPLES** over time in the real world and tried to live in a way that honors God and His kingdom.

And by doing that, we have gained **EXPERIENCE**. We have learned what works and what doesn't.

That testing has given us **WISDOM**. Knowing what has led to a good resolution and honors God in our lives.

But what we have had to admit is sometimes that is just not enough to rely on our principles, experience and wisdom.

That might sound weird but let me explain.

What we have found is when we want to do that, often we are REACTING rather than RESPONDING.

There is a huge difference between those two approaches.

When we REACT, we typically are moving to a decision point quickly and sometimes not giving the time we should give to allow God to work in our hearts.

When we RESPOND, we can take the time to stop, reflect and most importantly ask God a question that might sound like this.

“FATHER, BEFORE WE DECIDE WHAT TO SAY OR HOW WE SHOULD THINK ABOUT THIS, WE GIVE THIS SITUATION TO YOU AND ASK YOU TO BE LORD OVER IT, AND LORD OVER HOW WE THINK ABOUT IT.”

When we Respond, instead of Reacting:

We are taking a few moments to process what has happened before we give a solution;

We are modeling for our children how to deal with situations in their lives that they will face later

CONCLUSION:

Here is the good news.

- **You don't have to be perfect.**
- **You are learning just like your children.**
- **God is for you and wants to answer your prayers. He really does.**
- **He is waiting for you to call on Him.**
- **Your children are worth the investment.**