

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Drama of Parenting— Parenting 101

Ephesians 6:1-4

PowerPoint Presentation: None

Keywords: Parenting, Children, Family, Discipline, Obedience, Honor, Self-Control

SermonAudio blurb: none

I. Introduction.

- A. We return to the subject of parenting.
 - 1. Read 6:1-4.
 - 2. We find here that Paul gives two commands and only two commands for the child and two commands for the father.
 - a. Children, obey your parents and honor your parents.
 - b. Fathers, don't provoke your children to anger; instead bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.
- B. It is my argument that these simple, yet very broad commands help capture the essence of raising children as a Christian family.
 - 1. They don't and won't capture every idea or thought or concern about parenting.
 - 2. But what they do for us is set the basics firmly into our hearts so that as we meditate on these points we will find how far-reaching they really are.
 - 3. I believe that in the process of learning to be a "Christian" parent you will find yourself making much smaller mistakes less often and that are much easier to correct if you use Ephesians 6:1-4 as your basic, driving paradigm.
- C. Today I want to give several foundational observations to parenting. Many of you know these, but let this serve as a reminder. Hear these again and consider them in light of your current situation.

II. Parenting 101.

- A. You must have a high view of the Word of God.
 - 1. The standard Is God's Word.
 - a. Scripture is sufficient for the parent.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- b. 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”
 - c. Psalm 19 tells us that the Word of God is able to make the simple become wise.
 - d. Psalm 119:130, “The unfolding of Thy words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.”
2. The Spirit is the One Who empowers.
- a. Galatians 5:16-17, “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. [Astounding promise and provision here] For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh so that you may not do the things that you please.”
 - b. Important reminder: the Spirit will never contradict the Word. Therefore, you must do battle against your flesh and your emotions as they react to some of the things you will learn.
 - (1) We improperly embroil God in our lives when we claim that we believe God has led us to make a decision that is not true to the Bible.
 - (2) When you make your children, or your parenting, your idol then you will often be faced with strong desires to contradict the Word.
- B. We have the same challenges before us that every other generation has had since the Fall of man.
- 1. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 — They had to teach their children about the Lord.
 - 2. Romans 5:12 — They had sin in their lives and culture around them.
 - 3. 1 Corinthians 10:13 — Their temptations are our temptations.
 - 4. Proverbs 19:18, “Discipline your son while there is hope, And do not desire his death.” — They can mess up in their parenting.
 - 5. 2 Timothy 3:15-17 gives us the hope.
- C. You are given a high calling by God to be a parent. It is a privilege.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

1. God sovereignly planned for your children — “But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases.” (Psalm 115:3)
 2. Parenting is a enviable task (Psalm 127:5).
 - a. The presence of children means a legacy.
 - b. They will carry forward your love and convictions. They will be an ongoing display of the grace of God.
 3. You are the recipient of a divine gift (Psalm 127:3).
 4. If these statements are true, then it is only proper to act like it before your children and the public.
- D. Common types of parenting.
1. The selfish and impatient parent.
 - a. This style of parenting dwells upon what they think should be the finished product (the child) without ever considering the steps required to get there.
 - b. “Don’t bother me.”
 - c. “Why do you have to take up so much of my time?”
 - d. “I don’t see why I have to work all day and then come home and deal with you.”
 - e. “Why do I have to put up with your problems all the time?”
 - f. This parenting style assumes that the child doesn’t need to be trained, or that the training is the responsibility of others.
 2. The pleading parent.
 - a. This parent is intimidated by the child or is unwilling to exert the proper authority in the parent/child relationship.
 - b. “Please don’t make Mommy have to spank you.”
 - c. Another method in this style is counting out loud to the child after having already told them not to do something. You are merely trying to get the child to do something without much effort on your end.
 3. The manipulative parent.
 - a. The use of guilt or threats, which are usually empty threats.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- b. “If you don’t stop you can’t watch TV for a month!”
- c. “Don’t you know what you’re doing to me!”
- 4. The passive parent.
 - a. This style is very common in our country.
 - (1) At the heart of the matter is laziness or simple foolishness.
 - (2) This parent comes in many different styles.
 - (a) The “sigher.” This is the kind who sits on the couch before a TV and constantly sighs and groans about how he or she has such a burden due to the children.
 - (b) The “defender.” This is the kind who always offers a defense for any wrong behavior done by their child.
 - (c) The “promiser.” This is the kind who is always planning to do something with the children, but never quite does it.
 - (d) The “comparer.” This is the kind who is always looking at other children who have done wrong so as to compare and ultimately justify the behavior of their own children.
 - b. “Oh I am not worried, he will grow out of it.”
 - c. “My child would not do that.”
 - d. “Hey, relax! Don’t you realize that he is just a kid?”
 - e. “I just can’t believe that he can learn that when he is so young.”
 - f. “Well, you have to understand that Johnny is a strong willed child.”
 - g. “I didn’t turn out so bad.”
 - h. “Boy! I just don’t know what I am going to do with that boy.”
 - i. “I don’t want to push him to hard.”
 - j. This type of parenting also often views the ultimate responsibility to lie somewhere else.
 - (1) Daycare.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- (2) School.
- (3) Church.
- 5. The domineering parent.
 - a. This parent is unwilling to let the child grow and learn through their mistakes.
 - b. This can manifest itself in perfectionism.
 - (1) “You don’t know how to do this, so let me do it.”
 - c. It can also be seen through vicarious living.
 - (1) “I want Johnny to have opportunities I never had.”
 - (2) Beauty pageants for children.
- 6. The overprotective parent.
 - a. This is seen in not letting the child take risks in life. We call them “helicopter” parents now.
 - b. This parent does not allow the child to learn how to think for himself.
- 7. These parents often are affected by at least one of four influences.
 - a. Family background.
 - (1) “My mom did it, so it can’t be that bad.”
 - (2) “My parents raised 12 kids, are you telling me they didn’t know what they were doing?”
 - b. Laziness/poor priorities.
 - (1) “I don’t have that kind of time.”
 - (2) “I was busy doing the laundry.”
 - (3) “But I was on the phone, what did you expect from me? Put her on hold while I discipline him? Be real!”
 - c. Psychology.
 - (1) “Haven’t you read all those studies on spanking?”
 - (2) “If you are negative you will hurt his self-esteem.”
 - (3) “We believe in a nurturing environment for our children.”

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- d. Peer Pressure.
 - (1) “None of my friends believe in doing it that way and their kids seem to be ok.”
 - (2) “I am afraid that someone might report me!”
- E. Relationships within the family.
 1. Personal relationship with God.
 - a. Both the husband and wife need to cultivate their walk with the Lord.
 - b. If you are passive or inconsistent with this supreme relationship, then it will show itself in all other areas of your life, including the children.
 - (1) The one’s who tend to be harshest on themselves are the one’s who tend to do this better than they realize. They have tender consciences and are aware of their ability to not be faithful.
 - (2) If you think you have this all together I can only say that you should be careful for a stumbling block is but one step away.
 - c. Matthew 22:37
 - (1) And He said to him, “you shall love the lord your god with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.”
 - (a) The Westminster Catechism has this for their first question and answer: What is the chief end of man? To love God and enjoy Him forever.
 - (b) John Piper writes in *Desiring God* that he believes a better answer to the question is, to love God by enjoying Him forever.
 - (c) God calls us to be enthralled with His person and glory. We are to find our greatest joy in Him alone. This is our first duty as humans.
 - (2) You must be committed to the Word (Proverbs 2:1-5).

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- (a) My son, if you will receive my words And treasure my commandments within you, Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; If you seek her as silver And search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will discern the fear of the LORD And discover the knowledge of God.
 - (b) The assumption in this passage is that your words and wisdom are things worthy of remembering. That they will direct the child to the Lord.
 - (3) You must be committed to prayer (Colossians 4:2).
 - (a) Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving;
 - (4) You must be committed to action:
 - (a) James 1:22, “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”
 - (b) Matthew 7:21, ““Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.”
- F. The marital relationship.
- 1. This is the central relationship that occurs between people.
 - 2. When God created Adam He also said that it is not good for him to be alone (Genesis 2:18).
 - a. Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."
 - b. As a result He made Eve to be his wife.
 - c. Note that this relationship was the first and primary relationship ever created by God.
 - d. Note also that it was sufficient, everything is “very good”; He did not make some children to finish the picture.
 - 3. The strength of the children will be linked to the strength of the marriage.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- a. Guard your marital relationship jealously.
- b. Do not let the children displace the preeminence of your spouse.
- c. This bring challenges to the single parent, the blended family and the unequally yoked parents.
 - (1) But in each of these situations you are still expected to model and teach and lead the child in the way of Christ.
 - (2) Never forget that Timothy was in one of these situations.
4. Remember the flow of authority in a typical family:
 - a. God to Father/Husband to Wife to Children.
 - b. In an unequally yoked family you still must obey the commands of the Lord.
 - c. With blended homes recognize that there will be conflicting flows of authority and trust in God in the whole messy process.
 - d. In single parent home, you are the head of the home, either male or female.
5. Fathers must grasp the incredible responsibility that is their's.
 - a. The husband/father is the one who will set the entire tone for the household. Whether he desires to be or not, the Scripture ultimately holds him responsible for all the occurs within the home.
 - b. The husband must learn to develop a godly jealousy regarding his wife and household.
 - c. Here are some interesting statistics (I cannot remember where I got this data):
 - (1) If your parents worshiped with you regularly while you were growing up, chances are 80% that you will worship regularly as well as an adult.
 - (2) If only your mother regularly worshiped with you, chances are only 30% that you will worship regularly as an adult.
 - (3) However, if only your father worshiped regularly with you, chances are 70% that you will worship regularly as an adult.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- d. Too many homes are unable to properly approach child rearing simply because the roles are reversed or non-existent. God has built in natural consequences to all sinful behavior and the family unit is not exempt.
- G. The children's relationships.
- 1. Their relationship with the Lord.
 - a. The Word.
 - b. Prayer.
 - c. Doing the Word.
 - 2. Their relationship with the parents.
 - a. Ephesians 6:1-3
 - (1) Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH..
 - b. The children need to see your walk with God. They need to watch you pray, confess sin, repent, obey, and most important of all worship and enjoy God.
 - 3. Their relationship with each other.
 - a. Romans 12:9-10
 - (1) Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;
 - b. Romans 13:8
 - (1) Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.
 - c. Romans 14:19
 - (1) So then let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.
 - d. As a parent you seek to build genuine relationships between the children. You don't pit them against each other or against your spouse.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- (1) A home and family is where forgiveness is learned.
- (2) A servant's heart is modeled.
- (3) A love of true justice is seen.
- (4) Where truth is delighted in.
- (5) Where kindness to one another abounds.

H. The family's relationship to church.

1. The parents'.

a. Church is much more than just something you "do." For the believer, it is something you are part of. Therefore it is important that you are intimately connected to a local body of believers. You are not meant to be apart from them. In fact, that relationship is stronger than the family relationship.

- (1) Point out that there is a critical distinction between programs or activities of the church, and the church itself.
- (2) The church is actually not the building, but the body of Christ in believers.
- (3) Therefore, do not feel the need to be locked into everything a church offers. But do not allow yourself to retreat from the fellowship and life of the Body in an effort to be a good mother or father.
- (4) Be involved in ministry. Seek to minister to the other saints and do it with and around your children. Let them see the life that comes with being in Christ.
- (5) Remember that not everyone in a church will carry your convictions. That is impossible to accomplish and it is unhealthy. Learn to be patient with others, show grace and support those in leadership.
 - (a) i.e. Sunday School teachers. They have a class to run and you need to train your child to obey and respect that teacher.
 - (b) Nursery workers. They are not your servants, they cannot and should not have to try to keep each individual parents' wishes in mind.

2. The children's.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- a. Don't protect your children to the point that they do not participate in the life of the church.
- b. Christ has made it clear that little children are precious to Him, and we need to make it obvious that they are precious to us as believers.
- c. Teach them, however, that the church does not exist for them. They are not being catered to.

III. Conclusion.

- A. A better approach. There is a Chinese proverb that says, "One generation plants the trees, the next generation gets the shade."
 1. Our society has been planting scrub brush for generations.
 2. Perhaps some of you have enjoyed the shade of godly parents, and others of you have only seen but the smallest of shade.
 3. But each of you must ask yourself, "what am I planting?"
- B. The Bible tells us that children are a blessing and that they are a gift from God. Yet many parents wonder exactly how they could ever consider their children truly a blessing. Why is that?
 1. They have abandoned God's way.
 2. They have fallen in love with the pursuits of this world.
 - a. Leisure.
 - b. Sports.
 - c. Money and careers.
 3. Living in the "now;" rather than with eternity in the forefront. Colossians 3:1 says, ". . . keep seeking the things above, where Christ is.
 4. It is important to understand that having several children, or only a few has no actual bearing upon your spirituality, nor do the children necessarily become true blessings.
 - a. When children are brought up in the ways of God and they grow up to follow Christ, the blessing they bring to the parents is beyond comprehension.
 - b. When children are trained to be disobedient, lovers of self, and unruly they become merely a burden and a source of grief.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

(1) Proverbs 10:1, “A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish son is a grief to his mother.”

- C. It is here that we remember the gospel.
 - 1. In Jesus Christ we have forgiveness of sin.
 - 2. But also in Jesus Christ we have the power of sin broken so that we no longer need serve it.
 - 3. We learn to put off the things that belong to this age and put on the thinking and living that belongs to followers of Jesus Christ our Lord.
- D. As you prepare to go home or to discuss this sermon in the CG think about what drives you each day with regard to parenting.
 - 1. What needs to be repented of? What way are you misunderstanding your role?
 - 2. If you are grandparents, what is your strategy to aid your children in their parenting? What needs to be repaired perhaps in your relationship with them?
 - 3. If you are single, are you considering your responsibility to store up wisdom for that day perhaps that you have children?
- E. The little ones of Missio are gifts of God not only to the parent but to society and to the Church. Let us remember that as we move forward.