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## **The Drama of Parenting— Parenting 301**

### **Ephesians 6:1-4**

**PowerPoint Presentation: None**

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

**SermonAudio blurb: none**

#### **I. Introduction.**

- A. We continue with this series based off of Ephesians 6:1-4 on the duties of parents and children.
- B. Several points were taught, the first was so very important: Be humble.
- C. From there I taught on the “do nots” of biblical parenting:
  - 1. Do not provoke your child to anger (Ephesians 6:4).
  - 2. Do not exasperate your child (Colossians 3:12).
  - 3. Do not withhold physical discipline (Proverbs 13:24).
    - a. It is worth noting that I have preached several sermons on the subject of parenting and have dealt little with this subject. Spanking is easy, raising a child in a Christ-centered, gospel-immersed home is not.
    - b. Parents must have a much bigger view of parenting than disciplining a child when they are out of line.
    - c. But a foolish parent withholds discipline when it is proper and necessary. Do not neglect the warning by God, the giver of children, in this passage, *“He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.”*
    - d. As I teach on this later, it will be my contention that the bulk of your discipline needs will be done by 5-7 years of age.
- D. Today we move into the positive side of parenting. What we are to do.

#### **II. Parenting 301 — The “do’s” of biblical parenting.**

- A. Do focus your attention upon your children, not other’s.
  - 1. It is easy to become a self-proclaimed expert in child rearing but we must all remember that opinions are cheap.

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2. Many people find it easier to focus on the problems of other children; rather than examining their own. In the same way, many parents will determine that other parents are not doing things the best way, while their own parenting actions are weak at best.
3. Matthew 7:1-4 tells us that we need to be looking at ourselves first.

*“Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye?”*

4. We must all earn the right to be heard and respected.
5. This is why Titus 2 tells us that the older women are to be teaching the younger women how to love their children, husbands, and keep their homes.
  - a. Of course this presupposes that the old women have made it their goal and purpose to become experts in these areas. There are many older women who really have little authority to speak.
  - b. Learn to be picky with whom you listen to for advice. Seek the direction of older, mature believers, who have raised up godly children.
  - c. If you have a older woman who is trying to speak into your parenting who was not faithful herself ask yourself a few questions to help in deciding how much you instruction you will receive:
    - (1) First, was she a believer when raising her children? Or if a Christian, was she in a healthy, biblically sound church?
    - (2) Second, does she model a heart of repentance over how she viewed her children when they were in her home?
      - (a) Remember that not every home is a home of victory. But how we respond to those events can bring great wisdom to others.
      - (b) Example would be a person who was fired for unfaithfulness or incompetence in a job. Would you hear their advice on work? Would your decision be different if you saw that they had learned from that experience and reflected a whole different attitude about work, one consistent with God's commands?

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- (3) Third, if she is a grandmother, does her stance toward her grandchildren reflect that heart of repentance?
- d. Fathers, do the same on your end and it can both save you the misery of bad advice and the joy of godly counsel. Keep a close watch on who is speaking into the life and parenting of your wife.
- B. Do be focused on the spiritual side of the child.
  - 1. The Bible does not disregard the need to be developed in a balanced way.
  - 2. But the preeminent goal of all parents is to raise godly children.
  - 3. 1 Timothy 4:7-9.

*“But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance.”*

- 4. This is utterly critical for each parent to understand. We must constantly examine what you are doing, and what you are hoping to develop in our children.
- 5. Understand that this is not an “either/or” proposition. The spiritual aspect of your child flows seamlessly through all aspects of his life.
- 6. Ask yourself these questions:
  - a. Do I pray for the spiritual development of my children?
  - b. Do I set godly examples for my children to see?
    - (1) Television shows and movies watched (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:3).

*“For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality.”*

- (2) Language used (cf. Ephesians 4:29).

*“Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.”*

- (3) Business practices.
- (4) Money management.
- (5) Issues related to self-control.

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- (6) Marriage roles.
- (7) Decision-making.
- (8) Leisure activities.
- (9) Church relationship (cf. Hebrews.10:25).

*“... not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”*

- (10) Gossip (cf. Proverbs 20:19).

*“He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, Therefore do not associate with a gossip.”*

- (11) Obeying the law.

- (a) Romans 13:1

*“Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.”*

- (b) 1 Peter 2:16-17

*“Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.”*

- c. Do I ignore biblical commands because I don't “agree” with them (cf. James 4:17)?

*“Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.”*

- d. Do I discuss the reality of sin with my child?
- e. Do I understand exactly what the Gospel is and do I personally believe it and can I properly teach it to my child?
- f. Do I strive to bring the person and presence of God into everything we do (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:31).

*“Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”*

- 7. Having a child who excels in school is not the goal.
- 8. Having a child who is popular or well-liked is not the goal.
- 9. Having a child who is well behaved is not the goal.
- 10. Having a child who professes to be saved is not the goal.
- 11. The goal is to raise a child who shows a personal, growing relationship with the Lord. The child models being a disciple of Jesus Christ.

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- a. This should show itself in all aspects of his or her life.
  - b. Remember that Ephesians 6:1-3 is speaking to a Christian child.
- C. Do be consistent.
1. Probably the greatest hindrance to good parenting is this simple point. One of the simplest ways to exasperate and anger your children is inconsistency.
  2. Both parents must be on the same pathway regarding the training of their child.
    - a. It is here that the headship/submission model of the Bible comes into full play.
    - b. Christ Himself said that a “house divided against itself will not stand” (Matthew 12:25).
    - c. The Bible says that a wife can build her house, or she can tear it down (Proverbs 14:1).

*“The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish tears it down with her own hands.”*

- d. The foolish husband will give the leadership and development of the house over to the wife and rob it of the blessing God gives to obedience.
3. Begin to set basic goals that need to be accomplished. Don’t look so far down the road that you become discouraged with the amount of effort it will take. Remember that God will always support, strengthen, and direct those who are obeying Him.
- a. Over the past weeks you have been taking inventory of the current state of your house, your marriage, and your children.
  - b. Take two or three areas that need to be changed and begin to put the changes into action.
    - (1) One example would be in the area of marriage roles. If the wife is used to being the final say, or she manipulates the conversation to get her way, then this would be a key area to begin to stop. The wife needs to begin to ask her husband for his direction and goals. The husband needs to start making decisions. And both need to begin to pray for one another.

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- (2) If your child whines or cries whenever things don't go his way then begin to discipline him immediately. Explain to the child that whining is rebellion. Tell him that from this point forward he will be spanked for whining with no more warnings. He will also not receive the thing that he was whining about.

#### Parenting in Practice

Ted Tripp seems to argue against punitive measures in his book, *Shepherding A Child's Heart*. I believe that what he is arguing against is the type of punishment that carries no instruction or training aspect with it. As he illustrates on page 86, grounding is very easy to do but it does not address the heart issue. Therefore, all the child learns is how to endure that time-frame of penalty. He also points out on page 85 that this type of correction is usually given in the way of threats.

However, the Bible abundantly shows that there are consequences attached to sinful choices. Some of those choices are potentially life-threatening.

Proverbs 19:19 says, "A man of great anger will bear the penalty, For if you rescue him, you will only have to do it again." This is a critical passage for all parents to learn and live by. The principle is simple; don't rescue a person from the consequences of sin; allow those consequences to occur so that the lesson may be learned.

What if your child was wanting to buy a bicycle, but instead of saving money, decided to systematically steal from your wallet small amounts of money and claiming to have earned it doing small chores? Yelling and screaming is not the answer. Threats will not help. Telling the child that he will never own a bicycle for the next 10 years is not the answer either. But neither is simply spanking him.

The answer is more complex than any of these. The first thing is to deal with the heart, for the actions of thievery and lying must be confronted from a biblical level. The parent needs to be able to show the child passages such as Proverbs 21:6, "The acquisition of treasures by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor, the pursuit of death." Here the parent is trying to teach the child that anything gained through a lie quickly fades. Another key passage would be Proverbs 12:22, "Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, But those who deal faithfully are His delight." Now you would be looking deep into the eyes of the child and clearly telling him that God utterly detests those who love to lie. Then perhaps you would show him Proverbs 6:16-17, "There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil . . ." Here you can talk to him about the fact that not only was he lying, but that

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his heart was wickedly making these plans (what a great teaching moment regarding true salvation!) and that these are hated by God.

Now at this point you would need to spank him. But are you through? Perhaps. The child may be utterly broken over his sin, he is showing true repentance and he is seeking to set things right before God and man. But what if this is something you notice your child has a bent toward? Well, now would be a natural time to show him the natural consequences of evil actions. You may want to show him Proverbs 6:12-14, *“A worthless person, a wicked man, Is the one who walks with a perverse mouth, who winks with his eyes, who signals with his feet, Who points with his fingers; who with perversity in his heart continually devises evil, Who spreads strife. Therefore his calamity will come suddenly; Instantly he will be broken and there will be no healing.”* You may explain that because of the seriousness of his actions he has lost the privilege of owning a bicycle for a specific period of time (this will also help determine the validity of his repentance). You would also explain to him that he needs to first pay back all stolen money, plus extra, before he can consider buying any extraneous item (cf. Exodus 22:1, *“If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he shall pay five oxen for the ox and four sheep for the sheep.”*).

D. Do give boundaries.

- a. First, make certain that they are reasonable. If not, they will only exasperate or anger the child. At the same time, do not let the child decide what the boundaries should be.
- b. Second, begin to establish boundaries that are biblical. These are commands that the Bible teaches. These are also commands that are still in effect.
- c. Third, set boundaries that are based upon wisdom and biblical principles.
  - (1) One example would be from Proverbs 25:16, *“Have you found honey? Eat only what you need, That you not have it in excess and vomit it.”* This says that too much of anything is bad for you.
  - (2) Another example may be to not allow fashion magazines to be read. This would be due to passages warning against vanity, excessive concern with appearances, or immorality.
- d. Fourth, make sure that the boundaries established are clearly defined.
- e. Fifth, make only those boundaries that can be enforced.

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- (1) Say what you mean and make sure you mean what you say.
  - (2) This requires that you resist knee-jerk reactions and give carefully thought out requests. It is never fair to give thoughtless commands.
- f. Note that boundaries are not going to make a problem go away. That external problem is coming from a heart problem. But, they will help you see areas that need to be improved upon, they will protect the child, and they will give a good footing for you to teach the child practical applications to the Scripture.
2. Do allow for the natural consequences of your child's actions and behavior. These can be both positive or negative.
- a. Proverbs 19:19 says, "*A man of great anger will bear the penalty, For if you rescue him, you will only have to do it again.*"
  - b. Galatians 6:7 teaches the principle of sowing and reaping.

*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.*

- c. 1 Corinthians 9:24 ff talks about running the race with the goal of winning a prize.
3. Do expect immediate obedience to a command/directive that you give.
- a. Obedience defined is simply the act and attitude of responding to another person's authority in a submissive manner.
  - b. If you have older children then you should be finding yourself giving more recommendations than commands. It is the younger child who needs to learn to obey immediately. Then, as they grow older they will begin to develop these actions as convictions from within and you can exert influence more than authority.
  - c. Understand also that almost all parents do train their child to obey. The question is whether it is biblical obedience. An example of this that many children have learned to obey only when the parent is angry. Others only will obey when the hand of the father gets raised in a threat. Others only will obey when it is determined to be convenient to them. Regardless, all of these children do this only because it was tolerated and taught to them by their parents.
  - d. Four principles for biblical obedience
    - (1) Without challenge.

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- (a) A simple guideline for you is to ask yourself if it is proper to challenge the Lord when He gives a command.
- (b) Obedience does not occur if the child argues about the validity of the command, or the fairness of it.
- (c) This challenging can be done one of two ways:
  - i) Actively.
  - ii) Passively.
- (2) Without excuse.
  - (a) When the child has chosen not to obey, do not be ready to accept an excuse. To do so will simply train the child to always create excuses to work around obedience.
  - (b) The only standard that you should accept is immediate obedience.
- (3) Without delay.
  - (a) “Just a second dad, I just need to finish this chapter in my book.”
  - (b) “But mom, I am not tired.”
  - (c) Watch out for diversionary conversation starters.
- (4) With precision (1 Samuel 15:1-23).
  - (a) In verse three, what did the Lord command Saul to go and do?
  - (b) According to verse nine, did Saul obey?
  - (c) What was Saul’s perspective of his actions (vs. 13)?
  - (d) What did Saul do after Samuel confronted him (vss. 20-21)?
  - (e) In verse 23, what does Samuel equate disobedience with?
- e. Illustration of first time obedience.
  - (1) What percent of time does God expect us to obey Him?

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- (2) Is obeying a parent the same as obeying God?
  - (3) What percent of time should we expect our children to obey us?
  - (4) If your child does not obey the first time you say something, but does obey the second time, what percent of the time is he obeying?
  - (5) The bottom line is this. To settle for less than proper obedience is to be guilty of disobedience yourself as a parent. You are to train your child in the way he should go, not in the way he should not.
- f. Make sure they hear and understand you.
- (1) Teach your child to give a verbal response of affirmation.
    - (a) “Coming Mommy!”
    - (b) This is very important for two reasons:
      - i) First, it lets you know that the child has heard you.
      - ii) Second, it puts the child in the situation that he must choose to then not follow through with his words.
    - (c) Remember to demand immediate response after they acknowledge you.
  - (2) Teach your child to give a verbal response of obedience.
    - (a) “Yes ma’am.”
    - (b) This may seem trivial or harsh, but it is based upon the idea that the child needs to show respect to the parent. It also reinforces to the child that they have given their word that they would obey.
  - (3) As a rule, talk to the child as he stands before you.
    - (a) Avoid yelling through the house.
    - (b) Teach the child to come. If there are several children, teach them to come even if they are not certain it was their name called.

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- (4) If you expect your child to listen for your voice then he will hear your voice.
  - (a) A child can discern a parent's voice from out of a crowd of people.
  - (b) Teach the child that they are responsible to not go so far that they are out of earshot.
  - (c) This is where the verbal response helps, for you should immediately hear the child respond to your call or command.

### **III. Conclusion.**

- A. For each parent and grandparent in this room, if you took to heart last week's message and will apply this week's message immediately you will begin to establish a foundation from which good things might be built.
- B. Humility and a long view of life are both so important to parenting.
- C. A desire to honor the Lord in this massive part of your life is critical. It is owning the words of Paul in Ephesians 4:1 where he entreats us to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.