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## **The Drama of Parenting— Parenting 351**

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

**PowerPoint Presentation: None**

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

- A. I thank you for allowing me to go and celebrate my father's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. It was a joy and a privilege.
- B. We come again to the issue of parenting. I am taking my time on this topic because for those with children it will dominate at the very minimum, 18 years of your life. But the reality is that it will dominate the vast majority of your lives as parents and grandparents.
- C. One goal as a church is to create such a unique, gospel-centered, biblically sound parenting model that permeates the entire church. One that invites those who visit to inquire and to learn.
- D. Two weeks ago I began to work through several positive aspects of biblical parenting. As I did, I also talked about what those positive things did NOT look like. Such as having happy children, or successful ones.
- E. Today we will simply pick up where we left off. And the first point is massive so please pay attention.

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

- A. 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).

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- 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.
    - (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.

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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 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

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or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he shall pay five oxen for the ox and four sheep for the sheep.”).

B. 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.
    - (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.

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- 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.
      - (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.

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- (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?
  - (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.

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- 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.
  - (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.

- 4.      Do use principles more than rules.

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- a. By now you may be finding that your parenting approach is radically changing. No longer are you tolerating blatant sin and disobedience. No longer are you allowing the child to insert himself between you and your spouse. And hopefully you are now giving greater thought to what you are doing with regard to the raising of the children and why you chose that direction.
- b. Remember that what you are attempting to do is not create the perfect little child. It is an impossibility and will only end up exhausting you and creating a huge mess of pride splashed all over you and your children.
- c. You are concerned about the heart of the child. You are expecting change not because it makes the children more enjoyable, but because it is pleasing to the Lord. Therefore, you are trying to train the child in the way that bring the Lord the greatest amount of glory.
- d. One of the problems that can happen at this point is that you create a million rules within the home. This is not necessary and is often unwise. If you have fifty rules, then you have to remember each of them perfectly. Obviously that will control your entire existence and will defeat the real goal of training your children.
  - (1) If you think about it, how many rules did the Lord give Adam?
  - (2) How many commandments were written on stone on Mount Sinai?
  - (3) When Christ was asked what the key commandment was, He answered, "One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 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.' "This is the great and foremost commandment. "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."
- e. If you examine sub-points (2) and (3) above you will find that they are not really rules; rather, they are principles.

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- (1) By setting them down as governing principles the Lord covered a huge amount of territory that would have taken hundreds of volumes in current day legalese
- (2) In the same way parents need to establish wise principles within their home. These principles need to be drawn from the Scripture and applied to everyday living.
- (3) One example is that they shall love the Lord with all their heart, soul, and mind.
  - (a) Would they be complying with this principle if they are not reading their Bible on a consistent basis?
  - (b) How about if they watch shows that denigrate the Lord?
  - (c) What about not wanting to go to Sunday School, or sing in church? Memorize verses? Obey their teachers?
  - (d) You see, not singing is really not that big a deal. But it becomes one when the songs are songs of praise to the Lord. The same with memorization and such.
- (4) Another example would be to not let any unwholesome word proceed from the mouth (Ephesians 4:29).
  - (a) Do you tolerate cut downs? Mockings?
  - (b) Is it proper, then, to allow a child to hurl accusations at you or others?
  - (c) Is it proper to speak in an wrathful manner?
5. Do give the opportunity for appeals.
  - a. No parent should ever assume that he is always right, or always understands a situation to its fullest. One of the quickest ways that you can create exasperation or anger within your children is by being so rigid that there are never times that you allow your child to give you additional information that may cause you to reverse or modify your previous directive or decision.
  - b. This process gives your child the knowledge that he always has the opportunity to appeal something that is perceived to be unfair or unreasonable.

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- c. The appeal process also gives the parents an opportunity to discern the maturation process of their child. They are able to listen to the child's reasoning, argumentation, and delivery to see certain aspects of growth that are very important. Examples would be: gentle speech, care with words, or selfish motives.
- d. Rules for effective appeals.
  - (1) It must be made to the parent who is giving the instruction.
    - (a) Do not allow the child to go to the other parent to make the appeal; especially if that parent did not hear the instruction.
    - (b) This is a common ploy by a child and it must be met with swift and certain discipline. The reason for this is that the child is often attempting to play one parent off of the other. This violates the centrality of the marriage relationship.
  - (2) It must be done with an attitude of respect.
    - (a) Any time the child responds in a wrong (sinful) manner it must be dealt with.
    - (b) Remember that the heart of the child is the issue in all that you do.
    - (c) The child should be showing an attitude of meekness. This attitude should be present because the child understands that the parent has the right to make the decision and the authority to overrule any appeal.
    - (d) "Why can't I . . . ?" But Mom . . . " "Do I have to . . . ?" Are not respectful appeals; rather, they are challenges to authority and are sin.
  - (3) The appeal can only be made once.
    - (a) An appeal is the offering of additional information that the parent may not be aware of and if it had been known may have caused a different decision.
    - (b) It is not a tool for the child to use so that he can delay unpleasant activities.
  - (4) The appeal process is a privilege.

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- (a) Do not allow a child to exploit it by appealing anything and everything.
  - (b) What if you notice a large amount of appeals? Assuming that you have warned the child of frivolous appeals, if the child's appeal is not based upon sound, clear reasons then he should be disciplined. An alternative is to suspend the appeal process for a period of time, but make certain that you don't just revoke it; use that time as an opportunity to train the child in the area of submission, respect for authority, and consequences of sinful behavior.
- (5) The child must first obey the parent before making the appeal.
- (a) This is best understood by way of an example.
  - (b) Frank had been working a lot of extra time recently and was concerned that he had not spent much time with his children. As a result he took his three children to the lake to go fishing. Two of the kids stayed near him, but the third, Bob, wandered a distance away and was fishing there. Frank called him to come back over to where the rest of the family was fishing.  
  
Bob told his father he was coming and came immediately over. At this point in time he then asked if he could appeal the request. After agreeing to it, Frank found out that a friend of Bob's had told him that he had caught several fish over at the other spot and that was why he wanted to fish there. Frank then changed his decision and allowed his son to fish at the other place.  
  
This method preserves the respect and obedience that Bob was to show to his father. At the same time, it allows Frank to change a decision that was not based upon all the facts.
- e. One problem that can arise from the appeal process is conflicting requirements by the parents to the same child. An example of this would be the father telling his son to mow the lawn after dinner

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that day. The mother was unaware of this and told the son to clean up the bathroom after dinner (the father was working late that night). Here is the flow of events in this situation.

- (1) The mother gives her directive.
- (2) The son would acknowledge it (“Yes Ma’am”) and then ask for an appeal.
  - (a) Note that the son has a choice here. He could just obey his mom without telling her of what his dad had said, thus getting out of a hard job.
  - (b) This should not be allowed. If the father came home and found the lawn unmowed, he should be investigating why. If the son’s defense was that his mom told him to do the bathroom but he never told his mom about the earlier directive then he is wrong and should be disciplined.
- (3) The mother would grant it or refuse it.
  - (4) If she refuses, then she is now responsible to her husband for the lawn not being mowed.
    - (a) If it is granted then she is told that dad wanted him to mow the lawn right after dinner.
- (5) The mother now reconsiders her directive. Regardless of her ultimate decision the responsibility is upon the mother and the son has been obedient.

### **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.