

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 701

Ephesians 6:1-4

PowerPoint Presentation: None

Keywords: Parenting, Children, Family, Rebellion, Repentance

SermonAudio blurb: none

I. Introduction.

- A. We come near the end of this series on parenting. What we have learned is very broad.
- B. Parenting is an art in many ways because you are dealing with another human being. And no two are the same requiring us to approach each of our children uniquely.
- C. I believe that if you take what I taught over these last many weeks seriously that you will find much help in that task of raising up the next generation.
- D. However, there will arise in your time as a parent certain times where parenting can be very, very hard. This is when your child decides to stiffen their necks against your instruction and move toward rebellion.
- E. Today I want to speak on dealing with this difficult aspect of parenting and offer advice and instruction. I will break it down into three broad age ranges as they usually are different in what the rebellion looks like and how it must be addressed.
- F. Please understand that in many ways this message will be negative in its tone. You cannot change a rebellious heart, only God can. But you must address that rebellion. What I am trying to teach you is how to address it.
- G. The best way to keep rebellion from occurring is to be faithful in how you raise your children from early childhood on to adulthood. In other words, by applying with prayerful diligence what I taught you over these many weeks.

II. Rebellion in The Home.

- A. Like the pastoral ministry, parenting is not something to be done in a passive spirit.
 - 1. Parents are called by God to cultivate a spirit of discernment, wisdom and humility into the heart of their children. Too often though turn our children over to others who will be major influencers in what they believe, love and how they act.

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. Parenting is a full time job that actually affords no breaks. It is a task of shepherding your children into adulthood in a field that is filled with wolves in every disguise known and unknown.
3. Consider these words: “The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the Lord which He had done for Israel. . . . All that generation also were gathered to their fathers and there arose another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel.” (Judges 2:7, 10)

In other words, almost an entire nation of parents failed to bring their children up in the fear and knowledge of the Lord.

4. The challenge is that unlike pastors/elders this responsibility comes without notice at times. An elder is one who has already proven faithfulness and wisdom. A parent happens simply through pregnancy.
5. When you are dealing with children who decide to push back against the standards and wishes of the parents it requires action. Wisdom will help you in deciding what action but action is required nonetheless.
6. What you can deal with easily in the early years will progressively become harder as the child transitions into young adulthood. Therefore, take up the responsibility to correct, rebuke, discipline, and instruct your children, especially when they are pushing back.
7. When you consider rebellion in the scripture you never find it treated lightly.
 - a. In Deuteronomy 13:5 God commands that false prophet to be killed because what he is really doing is counseling people to rebel against the Lord.
 - b. In 1 Samuel 15:23 we have the sad story of King Saul being rejected as king of Israel because he rebelled by not obeying God’s commands. Samuel, the prophet, tells him, “For rebellion is as the sin of divination. . . .” The reason they are the same is that rebellion is assuming you know better the mind of God so you choose to go your own way rather than as God has directed.
 - c. Read the whole of Isaiah or Jeremiah to see how rebellion, once it takes hold, is a devilishly hard thing to turn. Truly it requires a heart to be broken and changed. “Alas, sinful nation, People weighed down with iniquity, Offspring of evildoers, Sons who act

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

corruptly! They have abandoned the LORD, They have despised the Holy One of Israel, They have turned away from Him. Where will you be stricken again, As you continue in your rebellion? The whole head is sick, And the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head There is nothing sound in it, Only bruises, welts, and raw wounds, Not pressed out or bandaged, Nor softened with oil. Your land is desolate, Your cities are burned with fire, Your fields-- strangers are devouring them in your presence; It is desolation, as overthrown by strangers.” (Isaiah 1:4-7)

B. The early years (1-4):

1. First, the age breakdown is somewhat arbitrary but it does help us consider the natural development that occurs in your children and household.
2. During these formative years you are establishing the foundations of what you will need for the later years. Here you are expecting your child to obey and respect.
3. The rebellion that happens here is usually rather minor in itself. It is tantrums or repeatedly disobeying in some specific manner. For our home this seemed to come in sporadic moments and usually would last about a week or two.
4. Dealing with this is easy though it can be discouraging. You simply do not allow rebellion against your expectations to go unaddressed.
5. What is important to grasp is that each of these times there is a battle that is occurring, will the child submit their will under yours or will they assert it over yours? How you deal with this in those early years will affect the later years in many important ways.
6. Never treat rebellion as if it is cute nor give it excuses.

C. The middle years (5-12):

1. During these years the rebellion can begin to become much more subtle. The child is definitely developing his own sense of how life should work. There is a greater independence which is good, but it must be shepherded and developed.
2. Rebellion, as I am using it, is a time of willful rejection of your standards and expectations in your household.

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. Every child is going to fail and every child will sin. That is much different than when they know they are doing wrong, they do it anyhow and they often do it in a sneaky manner.
 - b. Deception is often a key part of rebellion in this age. Lying must be dealt with very strongly before it becomes a pattern in their life. When you have a child whose default is to lie you have a serious problem.
 3. It is always troubling when an 8 year old has a tantrum like a 3 year old might. That usually is because they learned that tantrums work.
 4. As they get older you will find that physical discipline does not work as well. That does not mean that you withhold that, but just understand that it tends to be much more limited in its ability to affect the child.
 5. During this time you are beginning to talk a lot more to your child. You need to be confronting and challenging the child when rebellion arises. You need to help them see how rebellion can manifest itself in many different ways.
 6. Rebukes and exhortation toward faithfulness is key. Usually their mouths begin to speak folly and you need to correct it rather than ignore it or laugh at it.
 7. You will find that your child at 11 can do a very good job at trying to outlast you regarding something they really want to do or to avoid. This is not a time for you to give in.
 8. As they get older I would deal with rebellious attitudes much harder than when they were young. To rebel at the age of 10 was always met with a very strong response.
 - a. Depending on the situation I always considered physical discipline.
 - b. But I also would add other responses as well. Loss of privileges and grounding was common.
 - c. Also there would be the loss of trust that they would have to deal with. They were breaking their word and they were acting in a deceitful manner. I needed them to learn that a reputation is hard to develop and easy to destroy. Better to learn that at 11 than 20.
- D. The later years (13-18):

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. It is in this season of life that rebellion begins to become more frightening for parents. And it is during this season that too often parents begin to give in to rebellious choices in fear of losing their children.
2. Deal with the differences of having older children who are still underage vs close to or at 18. Also how the seriousness of the situation as each year progresses. Hearts calcify; habits are established; new relationships erode family ties.
3. Also note that so often this part of the parenting often occurs during challenges in one's career. This can create many distractions that take your focus away from the home. This means that even those issues need to be thought through at a much earlier moment.
4. I cannot emphasize enough the need to allow consequences to come upon any act of rebellion at this point in their life.
 - a. A parent who continues to rescue their young adult from the consequences of sinful choices is a parent who actually hates his or her child. This is the essence of Proverbs 13:24, "he who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently."
 - b. To rescue or rescind consequences for sinful choices is simply to set you and your child up to repeat it later. Proverbs 19:19, "A man of great anger shall bear the penalty, For if you rescue him, you will only have to do it again."
 - c. Grounding.
 - d. Changing schooling options. Even the extreme of boarding schools.
 - e. Loss of privileges such as car, clothing, privacy, electronics, activities, friends, and even family interactions such as meals, family time, bathroom privileges. (Explain these with a bit more detail to help them understand how far they may have to take it.)
- E. Hard choices and hard decisions, when the rebellion will not stop.
 1. The home is like a small congregation.
 - a. Part of membership in a church is a willing submission from the members. A submission to the leadership, to the doctrine and to the practices.

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. This is also true of a family. If they will not listen after repeated warnings then you must send them out. Matthew 18 and 1 Corinthians 5.
 - c. They are not your enemy and they are not despised. It is a sending out, not a kicking out. It is done with grief but with a love of purity and holiness and spiritual health for the household. It is important to understand the power of leaven.
 - d. There comes a time when their words and actions are speaking so loud that they must be silenced (Titus 1:10)
2. It is not wrong to let them go their way (Luke 15:11-16).
- a. In this culture it would be utterly shameful what he did. Essentially wishing his father was dead.
 - b. The kindness of the father is an image of the kindness of God toward each of us as we continually treat Him in a similar way. Notice how he does not deny the funds but allows the son to go his own way.
 - c. When the son left the house notice that he was, in essence, dead and lost (vs 24). This shows how radical this break was by the son.
 - d. Notice also the great desire of the father to rejoice when the return of that rebellious son. But how it did not remove the consequences of past actions. Nor were those consequences pressed into the face of the son.
3. Common complaints or concerns:
- a. It is not loving.
 - (1) Proverbs 20:23; 27:5-6; 28:23.
 - (2) Hebrews 12:6.
 - (3) Revelation 3:17-19 (note the arrogance in the minds of the Laodiceans that is so often part of the rebellious and proud young adult).
 - b. They are just kids.
 - (1) The challenge here is to understand that our culture has extended the idea of being a “kid” well into the 20's. It is wiser to see that puberty is that turning point, where they have physically transitioned from childhood.

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) The wise parent is not slack in raising up mature children but rather is thinking about this even when they are very young.
 - c. Where is the grace?
 - (1) The simplest response is to give that question back to the person. Where is the grace in allowing and perpetuating sin? Where is the grace in not teaching the children that sin and folly have consequences so that later in life they have to discover it with no safety nets?
 - (2) Grace is patient but grace also gives discipline even when it is not pleasant to do so for both parties.
- 4. The spirit and goal of sending out:
 - a. Restoration of relationship (Matthew 18) This does not mean that they are to be brought back into the home. Each situation requires wisdom.
 - b. A repentant heart (look for the marks of real repentance – use the key points from earlier sermon)
 - c. It is not done in the heat of the moment or to get vengeance (Galatians 6:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:14).
 - d. If you must send them out it is in spite of your kindness and patience (Romans 2:1-5).
 - (1) When Paul speaks of the kindness of God it refers to His innate kindness toward mankind. He cares and provides for them in spite of their rejection. He calls them to repentance and he gives warning to flee from the wrath that will come in time.
 - (2) This is no different than what a parent does to a wayward son or daughter. You warn and warn. You pray and show kindness. You rebuke and you discipline. But there is a time where you then give them the fruit of their choices.
 - (3) Within the home there can come a point where your child, now a young adult, has chosen to not live under your care and oversight. They instead choose to essentially abuse your kindness and goodness. There should be a point that you will act in a manner consistent with God and give them over to their passions. Not in hate but not in pity either.

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

5. There is a point where they simply need to be confronted with the consequences of folly for the sake of their soul.
 - a. Mark 9:43-45 speaks of the idea of entering the Kingdom of God blind or lame rather than hell.
 - b. How much more true to allow temporary pain to be upon a rebellious son or daughter so that they might enter the Kingdom of God.
 6. Romans 1:18ff where God gives over mankind to their desires and the consequences that are built into rebellion.
 - a. God reveals His judgment/wrath 18-23. This rebellion is directed first to a rejection of God. And second it is directed to idols. Third, this is not done in ignorance but willfully.
 - b. God gives them over to that which they long for. The point of vss 26-27 is that they did not pursue God, who made them and who they should naturally love. Therefore, now they pursue relationships that are contrary to nature (28).
 - c. God steps away (in a sense) and let them fill themselves up with what they believed they were missing out on. As they fill themselves with misery through a miserable life they continue to show their rebellious hearts by approving this life to others.
- F. Pastoral thoughts:
1. Let the ache of your heart and the burden of your soul cause you to turn them into prayers to the Lord. 1 Peter 5 speaks of casting our cares upon him because he cares for us.
 2. When you must have a difficult talk there are a few suggestions I would give:
 - a. First, wait for a bit and pray for wisdom and courage.
 - b. Second, figure out the foundational problem and say it out loud a few times to make it comfortable in your mouth.
 - c. Third, decide what is the conclusion you have come to (i.e. you are grounded, you can't drive for 6 months, you must leave the house).
 - d. Finally, when you sit with your child you make it short and simple (write it out if you must). "In light of what you have chosen to do there are some decisions that I have made. I am going to tell you

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 root problem as I see it, my decision, and then, if you wish, I will give you my rationale. Understand the decision is made.”

III. Conclusion.

- A. Rebellion is in the heart of every person, including you.
- B. The only thing that ultimately will change the heart of a rebellious person is the gospel; therefore, begin with it, continue in it and end with it.
- C. Dealing with rebellion requires courage, faith and hope. So develop those qualities now so that you are not scrambling to play ‘catch up.’
- D. Do not pretend that everything is ok.
 - 1. When rebellion is present in your child there is no value in pretending it isn’t.
 - 2. Rebellion is high-handed and willful. It is deadly and destructive. And it always will affect the relationship of the members involved.
- E. Be a part of their lives as much as you can.
 - 1. There are some aspects that you cannot praise or participate in. But use care how you speak or make reference to those parts of their lives.
 - 2. Yet there are still many ways you can maintain connections with them and those should be pursued.
 - 3. Sending a rebellious child out of the house is not shutting them out of your lives. It is removing him from the blessings and protections of the home.
- F. Pray.
- G. Appeal to them more than you rebuke them.
 - 1. There should be genuine grief in your heart and demeanor toward the wayward child.
 - 2. Give that young person a proper image of how God bids sinners to come and repent.
- H. Point them to Christ.

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

Community Group Questions

1. For many this subject can be very difficult for many different reasons. What are the challenges you faced as you listened and considered what was taught?
2. Why is Pastor's point about the leaven effect of a rebellious young adult important to consider?
3. When might parents begin to discuss this subject with one another? Why and how might it be done?
4. If parents choose not to go this route with their children what are the other possible options available to them? Biblically, how do those options work themselves out?