

biblical purpose for parenting



The parent's _____

1. Commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 22:37-40)
 - The Word of God (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:3-4)
 - The God of the Word (Luke 14:25-35; 2 Cor 5:9; Phil 1:21)
2. Commitment to your spouse
 - Committed to the uniqueness of the marriage relationship (Gen 2:24; Mal 2:13-16; Prov 5:15-19; Eph 5:22-33)
 - Committed to your biblical roles (1 Cor 11; Eph 5:22-33; 1 Pet 3:1-7)
3. Commitment to your family
 - We are stewards of the truth about the one true God and His works (Deut 6:1-9)
 - We are also stewards of blessings (Rom 8:16; 1 Pet 3:7; Ps 127:3a, 5a; 128:3)
 - The home should be a blessed place for spiritual growth – like a greenhouse for disciples of Christ to flourish
 - Spiritually strong families make for strong disciple-making churches
4. Commitment to others
 - The church
 - Committed to ministry in the body (Gal 6:10)
 - Fulfilling the “one anothers”
 - Using spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12; Eph 4)
 - The world
 - Evangelism and making disciples (Matt 28:19-20)
 - Both local (“Jerusalem”) evangelism and world (“the uttermost part”) evangelism (Acts 1:8)
 - The atmosphere and relationships within our home are often our first opportunity to communicate with the lost. Our homes should be a light to a dark world.

The parent's goal

1. God's view of man

- Man is NOT inherently good
- Man is inherently evil (Rom 3:10-11)
 - Sin affects the whole human being (will, mind, emotions, behavior)
 - No area or aspect of human nature is untouched by sin = TOTAL DEPRAVITY
 - It is in this sinful condition that a child enters the world (Ps 58:3; 51:5)
 - Every child is wholly fallen and hence wholly in need of redemption, so that he must be taught about God, His nature, His law, His love and His forgiveness
 - The heart is the control center for life (Gen 8:21; James 1:14-15; Prov 4:23; Mark 7:21ff; Jer 17:9)
 - So, the issue in parenting is primarily internal, dealing with the child's heart, not only his behavior
 - Parenting, therefore, must focus on Christ – concern for a child's salvation and then his sanctification

2. God's directions to parents (Eph 6:4)

- Take the initiative to continuously bring up children to maturity – this entails hard and persevering work
 - There is to be no passive approach to parenting (remember our children are not morally neutral)
 - Bring them up continuously, preparing them for what is next or possible
 - We must (it's a command) actively pursue the task of bringing up our children
- Bring children up to maturity with discipline
 - Providing for a child's maturity entails training (discipline) with the use of rules, guidelines, restrictions, rewards, correction and structure
 - Children are to be trained in wise living (Prov 1:4; 7:7; 15:5; 22:3)
 - It is in submission to this training that children need to learn obedience to authority (Col 3:20)
 - Correction by rod and other consequences must be employed (Prov 13:24; 19:18; 23:13, 14; 29:15; Gal 6:7)
 - Though many parents avoid this part of their responsibility, they must at times OPPOSE their children. But it is conflict with a purpose.

- Bring children up to maturity with instruction
 - Providing for a child's maturity entails teaching them about the character and deeds of God and what He requires of them (Prov 1:7)
 - God's Word is the textbook for homeschooling (Deut 6:1-9; Ps 19:7; Prov 22:6; 2 Tim 3:16-17; Heb 4:12)
 - There must be balance between discipline and instruction and age and responsibility
- Bring children up to have a heart for God, fearing Him, obeying Him, loving Him and enjoying Him (Ecc 12:13-14)

The parent's challenges

1. Keeping the right motivation

- Pleasing God vs. pleasing self
 - Avoid being outcome driven (Num 20:8-13) – “Well, it works. The end justifies the means.”
 - Our parenting must be driven by the glory of God not my personal happiness (1 Cor 10:31; 2 Cor 5:9)
 - We see problems as opportunities for training and teaching our children for God's glory and pleasure
 - Your child's response is not necessarily the measure of biblical parenting
 - Your obedience to Scripture with the right motive makes you a faithful instrument in God's hands (James 1:25)
- Pleasing God vs. pleasing others
 - Parents must not allow themselves to be motivated by comparison with others (Gal 1:10; Col 3:22; 2 Cor 10:12)
 - Definitely learn from others, but do not use others as the standard by which you must live
 - Likewise, do not view your standards as the most “spiritual” and judge others accordingly
- Trust vs. fear (Prov 3:5-8; 1 John 4:16-18)
 - Trusting God means that we study Scripture to learn biblical principles for all areas of our lives
 - We ask questions that will help us be wise in applying those principles
 - We learn skillful living from older, wiser saints

→ We trust God to guide us and we trust Him for the outcome of our choices (Job 42:2)

→ God only requires from us that we be faithful (1 Cor 4:2)

2. Keeping the right focus

- Biblical parenting is not complicated

→ We can easily become like the Pharisees, piling up “heavy loads”

→ Sometimes we want more answers than what the Bible provides and so out of fear we create our own complex system or follow someone else’s method

→ This often breeds a false sense of confidence by substituting a particular parenting system for the faithful application of God’s Word

- Biblical parenting allows a variety of ways to apply biblical truth

→ When dealing with matters not specifically addressed in Scriptures, we must be governed by love for others and showing deference to others (Gal 5:13; Rom 14:19)

→ Personal preferences are not inherently wrong, but should not be equated with biblical directives

- Biblical parenting does not involve “quick fixes”

→ Parenting requires perseverance (Gal 6:9) in teaching, disciplining and praying

→ It takes time to get to the heart of the matter in order to gain a character victory that lasts a lifetime

→ Children learn little by little and day by day and we all need to love, support and forgive one another through successes and failure – we are in this together

- Biblical parenting understands the limitations of parental influence

→ We cannot control the results of our parenting – God does (Phil 1:6)

→ We are to be faithful with what we know is right with the right motives

→ We cannot change a child’s heart

→ Ultimately, our children are accountable to God (Ezek 18; Rom 14:12)

3. Keeping the right balance

- External and internal (Matt 5 & 6; 23:23-24, 27-28) – majoring on controlling the child’s behavior without using Scripture and prayer to deal with his heart

- Freedom and responsibility (Gal 5:13-14; 1 Pet 2:16) – giving too much freedom on one hand with no balancing restrictions and responsibilities on the other
 - Don't give too much freedom too soon
 - Allow a child more freedom as the child learns self-control – teaching them the principle of sowing and reaping (Gal 6:7)
 - Unnecessary control will not allow a child to learn from failing – mistakes make great teachers
- Friendship and authority – balancing our friendship with our children and our authority over them
 - Jesus is our dearest friend, but He is also our Lord
 - On one hand, we must not allow our children to progress to this peer relationship too quickly or we may jeopardize their ability to understand the biblical requirement that children submit to parental authority and teaching
 - On the other hand, if we are heavy-handed with authority, we may stifle the progress toward a wonderful, lifetime friendship
- Major issues and minor issues (Matt 23:23-24) – being overbearing on issues that are not clearly biblical
- Parenting as the sole focus of the Christian life and parenting as an important aspect of the Christian life – keeping in mind that we are more than parents
 - We should have a biblically accurate perspective of our priorities
 - Raising our children is part of a grander scheme
 - As important as it is, it cannot be the “hub” around which the “wheel of our lives” turns
 - As we keep the eternal perspective in mind, our role as parents will be kept in balance with every other important duty God has given us
 - Never let parenting consume you to the point where all of life revolves around it