

Finding Hope In hard Times
“Finding Hope In Our Relationships”
(Part 4)

Intro: Video: The Mom Song?

- Today being Mother’s day, I want to focus on finding hope in our relationships between parents and our children.
- How do we maintain hope through the process of parenting? Parenting is no easy job!
Answer: We must embrace Biblical values of parenting that produce hope. God’s way of doing things always provides hope. Let me give you 5 biblical values on parenting this Mother’s day that will breathe hope into your relationships with your kids.
- After this, we have some families who will be dedicating themselves and their kids today

I. Hope Results From Perseverance To Fulfill Your Role

II Thess. 3:13 “...do not grow weary of doing good.” (NASB)

Heb. 10:35-36 “So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.” (NIV) Parenting just takes a lot of perseverance. Persevering in parenting does produce hope. BUT, we make parenting a lot harder when we don’t embrace 2 key issues that help us hang in there.

A. Embrace your responsibility as a parent

1. I know this sounds rather simple, but it is very foundational for hope. I see so many parents who look at raising their kids as one of the many responsibilities in this life rather than one of their primary responsibilities.
2. I also see many fathers who look at raising their children as more the wife’s responsibility rather than shared equally. Their role is to work and be the provider. Parenting is more secondary.
3. Perseverance is impossible in anything until you fully embrace your role. When we become parents, it is a call of God upon our lives! It is the will of God that we fully embrace this responsibility to raise our children. (Both men and women!)
4. Without this, we will allow other priorities to hinder effective parenting. Our careers can get in the way / desire for money and possessions / our own selfishness / our desire for our old life back...life before kids.
5. We must embrace the fact that being a parent is one of the greatest earthly callings and commitments we can fulfill! This is the mindset that will allow us to persevere through the hardships of parenting. It is a calling we must fully embrace!

B. Embrace your season as a parent

1. You must understand what season of life you’re in and readjust your life accordingly. Now is springtime. Now is the time for planting / soil preparation / cultivating. If we want to see a good harvest in the fall, we have to do the work now!

2. We must understand this as parents. When our children are little, we are in the springtime of life. We must give ourselves to soil preparation / cultivating / sowing good seeds into their lives.
 3. Springtime is a hard season. It's hard to persevere in the springtime of life because it seems that it is all work and very little payoff. This is true! Statistically, before your children hit school age, it is the lowest level of life satisfaction people experience. It gets progressively better as they get older.
 4. This season doesn't last forever. It's short! If you don't do the necessary things in season, you can't make it up! How can you have hope when you've blown the season you're in. BUT, if you've done your job in the spring, there is great hope for the future seasons.
- Do you want to persevere as a parent? Embrace your God-given role fully and give yourself to the season you're in. If you do this, you can look forward in hope to a great harvest someday!

II. Hope Results From A Commitment To Discipline

Prov. 19:18 "Discipline your children while there is hope. Otherwise you will ruin their lives." (NLT) Notice it says while there is hope. If we wait too long and discipline incorrectly, we lose hope. WHY? Because our children are out of control! Discipline produces great hope in parenting. HOW?

A. Be consistent in discipline

1. This by far one of the greatest challenges in discipline. Mom and dad **MUST** be on the same page with disciplining the children. If you both have different rules for discipline you will confuse your kids and give them opportunity to manipulate you.
2. If you do not discipline the same, your children are running your home rather than you! This will never produce hope in your home just multiplied frustration.
3. It is **NOT** the severity of the discipline that affects your children's behavior. It is the inevitability of it. It is the consistency of it. Discipline that is most hopeful is when it is done consistently during the first 5 years. Wait longer, you have a battle!
4. Picture of road and guardrails (**Slide**) The rules we create in our homes are the guardrails for our children...the boundaries of their freedom for their own good. Discipline happens every time they walk outside the guardrails! You can't keep changing the guardrails. Consistency!
5. A word to all the grandparents about consistency. If you know what the rules are in your kid's home and purposely let your grandchildren break those rules in your home, you are undermining the authority of the parent!

B. Be creative in discipline

1. It just amazes me how many parents keep using discipline practices that don't work on their kids. If the method you're using doesn't deter bad behavior, change the method. This requires creativity!

2. Also, just because something used to work doesn't mean it will work for all time. Our children change and as they change our discipline should change with it. Discipline methods must change as your kids get older. You don't discipline a 13 year old like a 5 year old.
 3. One of my daughters did something where she knew there were going to be consequences. She was convinced we were going to take her car keys. I said, "Take your car keys? Why should I punish myself and have to drive you everywhere?" You're not losing your right to drive, you're losing your rights to your social life!"
- Your commitment to discipline will produce enormous hope in parenting.

III. Hope Results From A Lifestyle Of Consistency

Deut. 6:6-8 "And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders." (NLT)

A. Don't compartmentalize your faith

1. I will continue to talk about this forever because of the damage I see this doing. Are you living out your faith in front of your kids in every context of life? Do they see and hear you act like a follower of Christ no matter where you're at or what you're doing?
2. I believe this does more damage to the transfer of our faith and values to our kids more than any other single factor. How come kids reject the values of their parents? This is THE answer! (Explain compartmentalization)
3. Do they see Christ in your marriage / how you handle stress / crisis / tragedy / do they see Christ in the routines of life? / in the fun times / vacations / holidays / do they hear you talk about your faith?
4. If you asked your children; "Do your parents show you what it means to be a follower of Christ?" what would they say? Respect or contempt?
5. Our kids do not need perfect parents. They need authentic ones / genuine ones / consistent ones. This is what produces hope!

B. Allow your kids to catch your faith

1. Our kids catch our faith and values more than we teach it to them. Our children have 18-20+ years observing our lives. They will follow what we live not what we say. Therefore, more is always caught than taught. We have to ask ourselves what our kids are catching?
2. If we want our kids to catch our faith we must live it out in front of them in a way that is real and genuine. Lisa and I are seeing this payoff with our own kids. Our daughters serve (not because we require it) but because we have lived a life of serving others in front of them. Our daughters tithe, (not because we told them to), but because they have seen this in their parents.

3. When we see our kids living and embracing the faith and values they were raised with on their own, we have done our job as parents. This produces great hope!

IV. Hope Results From Correct Relational Priorities

Eph. 5:31-33 “As the Scriptures say, “A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.” This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.” (NLT)

A. Keep your marriage the priority

1. The best gift you can give to your children is a strong, vibrant, healthy marriage. It is clear from Scripture that the relational priority is to your spouse NOT to your children.
 2. It always concerns me when I hear a parent say, “I just live for me kids”. OR, “My kids are my life”. “My world just revolves around my kids”. “I don’t know how I could survive without them.” Let’s be careful...Love them yes, #1 NO!
 3. You can actually make your kids too important and this wrong priority hurts them in the future. WHY? All I’m doing is loving my kids!
 4. How is giving your kids an unbiblical model of marriage loving? They will follow your example! They will reproduce your marriage. How is teaching your kids they are the center of the universe loving? Can’t we see the damage this does to teach our kids that everything revolves around them?
 5. Your marriage is supposed to be a picture / illustration of the love between Christ and the church. If you do not make your marriage the priority over your children you give them a inaccurate model of Christ and His church.
- So, what is the proper relational priority?

B. Keep your children as welcomed additions

1. Our children are NOT the center of our lives. They are welcomed additions to our family. This is biblical and also teaches them a healthy role in relationships for the future. This is what produces the most hope!
2. Let your children know that the relational priority is your spouse. Men, you need to make sure your kids treat mom like the queen 365 days a year NOT just on Mother’s Day. (I may have 2 princesses in my home, but my wife is the Queen!)
3. Learn to tell your kids NO, so you can spend time together has a married couple. Teach your kids this! (Example) “Mom and dad time”.
4. This will NOT make your kids insecure. It will make them very secure because they will never worry about mom and dad getting a divorce. They see you making each other a priority. You are modeling something they can reproduce in their family someday. This relational priority will produce incredible hope in you and your children.
5. Some of you have allowed your marriage to fall apart for the sake of your children.

Wrong priority. Maybe it's time to make some changes!

V. Hope Results From God's Pre-Ordained Purposes

Eph. 2:10 "For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago." (NLT)

A. Be champions of your children's design

1. Since God has made each of us unique with His purposes in mind, we need to be very astute in understanding and pointing out to our kids how God made them. We need to be the biggest champion of their uniqueness's.
2. This world is constantly telling our kids what they are not. We **MUST** be committed to revealing to them who they are! They have a divine **SHAPE**. Explain. Some of you should take the 301 class to be better parents!

B. Be champions of your children's destiny

1. Can you imagine what it would be like to have a generation of kids growing up who believed they had a destiny from God to discover? Where they embraced God's purposes? Where life wasn't all about getting an education and a good paying job but about discovering God's plan for them?
2. I have spent the last 11 years trying to convince adults of this truth. No offense, but some of you are a hard sell! I can see you struggle believing this. **BUT**, can you imagine sowing this biblical truth into our kids when they 2, 5, 10, 16? This is **HOPE!**
3. They still may go on to college / earn degrees / get good paying jobs; Yet now they understand they are there for Kingdom purposes not just a paycheck! They have been strategically placed in that job by God to accomplish His will. Talk about hope!
4. This doesn't mean they all become pastors and missionaries. It means they understand God's Kingdom work in the marketplace! They are there fulfilling a destiny from God!
5. If we could raise a generation like this maybe we'd have less mid-life crisis and more mid-life conquering! Let's be committed to sowing this seed of hope into the lives of our children and grandchildren.

So on this Mother's day, can we persevere in the role as parents / will we commit to discipline / will we live a life of consistent faith in front of our kids / will we make our marriages the #1 earthly priority / will we champion God's destiny in the lives of our kids?

These are the things that will produce hope as we face the challenges of parenting.