

# How To Succeed At The Toughest Job In The World PARENTING

## **Intro: Video: If You Won't.**

If we are not intentional at bringing up the next generation of followers of Christ, someone else will be intentional. If we don't influence...someone else will. If we don't teach them...someone else will. The responsibility of being a parent is the toughest job in the world. It is also one of the highest callings. AND it is in desperate need today. Therefore, let's embrace this calling.

- There are 4 biblical principals that will help us become successful parents.
- All these principals apply to grandparents as well.

## **I. A Commitment To A Godly Environment**

*Deut. 6:6-9 "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. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." (NLT)*

- God and His word is the normal environment your children are to be exposed to. Things just don't grow right in the wrong environment. Plants don't and neither do people.

HOW?

### A. Let God change your life as a parent

1. We can't model something that is not real in our own lives. God will use the role of parenting to show us how deficient we are for the task. Being a parent has probably been one of the top 3 ways God has changed my life!
2. Being a parent has revealed so many areas of growth over the years. It has shown me my selfishness / pride / anger issues / control issues / impatience / lack of wisdom and resources. It pushed every button I had!
3. I actually thought I was pretty spiritually mature before I had children. There were times after I had children I was wondering if I was still saved! (just kidding) BUT, the role of parenting shows us we desperately need God to change our lives.
4. Your children need you to be a man or woman of God. This is the environment they need to grow up in. In order to be a successful parent, we need to be allowing God to mold us and shape us every day! (Pray this daily!)

### B. Model God's priorities every day

1. When it comes to modeling, consistency is the key. Our children don't need perfect parents but they do need consistent ones. They need us to model what it looks like to be a follower of Christ in everything we do.
2. My biggest complaint / soap box / concern for parents is THIS issue! Most Christina

parents live a compartmentalized faith. They talk about Jesus at church and live like unbelievers the rest of the week!

3. This is the #1 reason our faith does not transfer to our children. Our children can see the hypocrisy of this. Living this way may work when they are little, but it backfires when they hit adolescents.
4. The scripture says our faith must be incorporated into every piece of our lives. (When we rise up / lie down / when we're home / when we're away / repeat them over and over again) See...it's a lifestyle.
5. Our faith as parents should inspire our children to walk with God. This is the environment they need to grow up in. It is not the church environment that changes the lives of our children. It is the home environment!
  - Especially the role of the fathers - explain
6. What environment are you creating at home? Do you even talk about church when you go home? Ask your kids about kids church / student ministry / Mom and dad, do you discuss the message in front of your kids?

## II. A Commitment To Correct Wrong

- There are 3 key factors to successful discipline

### A. Start early

*Prov. 19:18 "Discipline your children while there is hope. Otherwise you will ruin their lives."* (NLT)

1. The time when there is the most hope that discipline is effective is when your children are young. How young? Dr James Dobson recommends at least by 18month.
2. The only way to develop consistency as a parent is to start when your children are young. This is when you and your spouse are learning how to get on the same page with discipline. (A skill you will need for many more years!)
3. It always amazed me how young my children were when I could recognize the sin nature. How early they could consciously disobey.
4. It is not the severity of the punishment that deters wrong behavior...it is the inevitability of it! It is in the early years where we as parent build into the lives of our children the inevitability of discipline. If they understand this in their 2's, they will understand it in their teens.

### B. Be creative

*Prov. 23:13-14 "Don't fail to discipline your children. They won't die if you spank them. Physical discipline may well save them from death."* (NLT)

1. Yes, physical discipline is an appropriate method of discipline according to the word of God. BUT, this should not be your only method of discipline. WHY? Because not every child responds well to this method. Your kids change with age. It's not appropriate for older children.
  - Physical discipline for older kids actually shames them.

- It is for younger children and it does not promote violence and it is not the same as hitting. (explain)
2. With every age there are creative ways to motivate right behavior. From times outs / to losing toys / losing privileges / losing car keys – cell phones – and a social life. As a parent, we must not fail to discipline of kids. It is part of the parenting process. So we might as well embrace it and be creative!

### C. Be fair

*Eph. 6:4 “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.” (NLT)*

1. We can over discipline and cause our kids to rebel. (provoke to anger) We can also under discipline and there becomes no deterrent for wrong behavior. They key is matching the time with the crime!
2. How do I know what is fair? I believe every parent must understand the developmental stages of your children. Parents must know how their children develop mentally and emotionally as they get older.
3. Why is this important? Because it will help you know what is fair and appropriate for each age. For example: If your 5 year old continues to leave his toys in the middle of the room after you’ve told him to pick them up and you say, “I’m taking that toy away for 6 months!” He has no comprehension of 6 months. To him 6 months and 6 hours are almost the same.
4. Every parent should have some books on the developmental stages of children. This is going to help you be a better parent and discipline with fairness and wisdom.

### III. A Commitment To Pray Continually

*I Sam. 12:23 “As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. “ (NIV)*

- Becoming a parent means we will pray for our children continually until the day we die.  
HOW?

#### A. Pray intentionally

1. This is getting beyond the “Lord bless my kids” prayers. It is praying for them intentionally / strategically / purposefully. It is focusing our prayer for them like a laser beam with aim.
2. I pray for their relationship with the Lord / they would follow His ways / protection from harm but also from Satan and his deception / I pray for their futures / spouses / relationships / about their fears – struggles- concerns- what’s on their agenda for the day.
3. Do we know our kids well enough to even pray like this? As our kids get older, are we engaged enough in their personal lives that we know what is going on and they know we are praying for them?
4. I’m always praying for my kid’s lives. If they have a test / tough assignment / tough day I want to know so I can pray for them. Then, at the end of the day, I ask them

how it went?

5. The great thing is now? Now that my daughters are older...they pray for me! This is what family does. We pray for each other!

#### B. Pray consistently

1. Pray every day. I pray for my kids almost every day. I will pray for them consistently until I die! I will never stop praying for them. This is my job as a dad! I will fight for my kids and their families on my knees!
2. I know every man here would physically fight to protect and defend his family. You just need to embrace this mentality when it comes to prayer. They need you to assume your spiritual headship role and fight for them in the spirit realm.
3. This is not your wife's job...it is your job as men. Embrace it and pray consistently for your kids!

### IV. A Commitment To Sow Destiny

*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)*

- Sowing destiny into the hearts of our children is teaching them that God has a plan and purpose for their lives they can discover. How do we sow this into our kids?

#### A. Embrace God's plan for your kids not yours

1. Our children belong to God not us. Therefore it is imperative that we support God's agenda for their lives not ours. It's OK to have hopes and dreams for your kids' future, but they must be tempered with this biblical truth.
  2. God's plan is better than our plans or our children. We want to be sowing into their minds at an early age that God has a plan for their lives.
  3. We want our kids to grow up with a sense of destiny. Can you imagine a generation of kids growing up with a biblical sense of discovering God's destiny for their lives? Where they know that life is not just about going to college so you can get a good job and make lots of money. (Is this what we want to sow into them?)
  4. As parents, we have the opportunity to teach our kids that there is more to life than this. We get to teach them there is another Kingdom perspective on life. There is a God who loves them and planned good things for them to discover and walk in.
  5. When I was a Sr. in HS, my school counselor tried to talk me out of going to Multnomah. "What kind of a living can you have going there?" Well...who's laughing now!
- Since God has a destiny to discover....

#### B. Help your kids see their unique design by God

1. In a world that is constantly sending messages to our children telling them what they are not, we have the responsibility as parents to help show our kids who they really are!

2. Their destiny is connected to their design. We have such power as parents to help our children embrace who they are. God's Kingdom doesn't value the things of this world. It's OK if our kids are not the smartest / best looking / best athletes / most popular. God could care less about these things!
3. We get to point out how God uniquely designed them for His Kingdom purposes. We get to point out their unique personality / their talents / passions / and help them value what God put inside them. God's Masterpieces!!!
4. One of the greatest problems today with kids is low self-esteem. We have the opportunity as parents to raise a generation without this issue. Can you imagine a generation of kids believing in their destiny; embracing their unique design; and not having esteem problems. They could change the world!
5. In reality, this is our job as parents...to raise a generation that will change the world for the Kingdom of God.

Parenting is a tough job. In fact, I believe it's the toughest. BUT, God can help us succeed if we embrace His principals of parenting.

- Commit to a godly environment
- Commit to correct wrong
- Commit to pray daily
- Commit to sow destiny

We have some families today that are going to publicly commit to these principals. Today is our child dedication Sunday. The worship team is going to come back up here and we're going to sing. As we sing, all parents who need to get their children can do so during this song.

Prayer