

Foundations for Parenting

Parenting 11-13, Part 1 Shepherding Goals

INTRODUCTION

Our Goal:

“We all know that God’s goal for our parenting is that we work ourselves out of a job. His plan is that we would be his instruments in producing children who are biblically mature, ready to face life in the fallen world, ready to be salt and light, ready to be contributors to his kingdom work, no longer needing the day-by-day guidance that we have given them for so many years.” - Paul Tripp

“Internalization of the gospel is the process of your children embracing the things of God as their own living faith. Your wish... is to see your children develop autonomous identities as persons under God.” - Tedd Tripp

“When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.” - 1 Corinthians 13:11

Our Children:

A Period of Rapid Change (Ages 11-13)

- Changing body
- Changing brain
- Changing world
- Changing convictions
- Changing relationships

Us:

“Things run along pretty smoothly until your kid reaches thirteen. That’s the time you need to stick ‘em in a barrel, hammer the lid down nice and snug, and feed ‘em through the knothole. And then, about the time he turns sixteen, plug up the knothole!” - Mark Twain

Our temptation in this season is to parent out of fear, using our authority to enforce rules and control behavior. In shepherding the hearts of our children, it is critical that we move from fear to faith, from legalism to grace, and from heavy authority to growing influence. We want to come along side our children, helping them in applying the gospel to their hearts and their lives.

I. SHEPHERDING IN FAITH

Parenting in faith, not out of fear

We must have faith in the very gospel we are helping our children in apply.

Both our children's weaknesses and our own deficiencies can tempt us to fear.

A. Our Children's Needs

"It is everywhere around us – on the television sitcom, in the magazine on the supermarket rack, on the shelves of the local bookstore...and yes, even in a number of Christian books on the family. Parents are afraid of their teenagers. Even as they are enjoying the early years of a child's life, they are looking over their shoulders with dread, expecting the worst, knowing that in a few short years this precious little one will turn into a monster overnight." - Paul Tripp

"Teenagers are capable of colossal blunders. There is an enormous gap between the teen's desire to be autonomous and his understanding of life. This is fertile soil for gigantic mistakes." - Tedd Tripp

The temptations, and even failures, of this season can become wonderful opportunities.

"Pre-adolescence and adolescence create a myriad of new temptations and redemptive opportunities for parents and children alike. If your children are converted, adolescent temptations will provide countless opportunities to shepherd them back to the Savior who offers grace for forgiveness and change. If your children are unconverted, adolescent temptations will provide you countless opportunities to shepherd them to the Savior who offers the gift of salvation."
- Greg Somerville

B. Our Needs

"The tumult of the teen years is not only about the attitudes and actions of teens, but the thoughts, desires, attitudes, and actions of parents as well. The teen years are hard for us because they tend to bring out the worst in us." - Paul Tripp

"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." - 1 Peter 5:5

Parenting humbles us and helps us to see how much we ourselves need the gospel.

C. God's Plan

Scripture gives us much reason for faith and hope.

God Is Faithful

- “Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations...” (Deuteronomy 7:9)
- “For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.” (Malachi 3:6)

Scripture Is Sufficient

- “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- “And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.” (Galatians 6:9)
- “Difficulties heaped upon difficulties can never rise to the level of the promise of God...Unbelief looks at the difficulty. Faith regards the promise.” - Charles Bridges

The Gospel is Powerful

- In parenting, our hope is in the power of the gospel.
- When parent out of this kind of faith it affects our motives and our methods.
- “Your heart’s desire in every phase of childrearing is to see your children internalize the gospel.” - Tedd Tripp
- “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” - Romans 1:16
- “For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” - 1 Corinthians 1:17-18
- “In all our nurturing as parents the gospel must be central. It is the only hope for forgiveness. It is the only hope for deep internal change. It is the only hope for power to live. The grace of the gospel is the center of everything for Christian parents.” - Tedd Tripp
- “It is time for us to reject the wholesale cynicism of our culture regarding adolescence. Rather than years of undirected and unproductive struggle, these are years of unprecedented opportunity. They are the golden age of parenting, when you begin to reap all the seeds you have sown in their lives, when you can help your teenager to internalize truth, preparing him or her for a productive, God-honoring life as an adult.” - Paul Tripp

II. SHEPHERDING WITH GRACE

Parenting with grace, not out of legalism

Big “Balancing” Goals:

1. Guard your child’s heart during this vulnerable season of change
 - Gatekeepers (Nehemiah 13:19-22)
 - “In every step you take about them, in every plan, and scheme, and arrangement, that concerns them, do not leave out that mighty question, ‘How will this affect their souls?’” - J.C. Ryle
 - “And [Jesus] said to his disciples, “Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin.” - Luke 17:1-2
2. Guide your child’s heart toward personal convictions
 - “I am afraid that many of us are so busy making decisions for our children in order to keep them safe that we do not teach them to develop their own set of internalized biblical convictions. It is one thing for a teenager to do what is right under a watchful eye or under the threat of punishment. It is quite another thing to see the independent, unpressured, heartfelt exercise of personal conviction.” - Paul Tripp

Seven Principles:

1. Because God’s Word is sufficient for all of life, I will base my parenting decisions on Scripture rather than on the opinions and practices of others. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
2. Because I understand the nature and power of indwelling sin, I will diligently monitor my child’s actions, graciously probe my child’s motives, and provide loving discipline as needed. (Jeremiah 17:9; Hebrews 12:6)
3. Because I recognize my limited discernment and daily need for God’s mercy, I will humbly seek to understand my child’s perspective before rushing to judgments. (Proverbs 18:13; Matthew 18:23-35)
4. Because children are by nature simple and inclined toward folly, I will be cautious about allowing new privileges that could expose my child to harm. (Proverbs 22:3, 22:15)
5. Because I am committed to helping my child mature into a wise adult, I will view temptations as God-given learning opportunities and will proactively seek new opportunities for my child’s growth. (Proverbs 22:6)

6. Because God calls Christians to unity in the Spirit, I will seek consensus with my spouse on all major parenting issues. (Ephesians 4:3)
7. Because I trust the unchanging character and promises of God, I will view my child's current circumstances and future choices with faith and hope. (Hebrews 11:1)

III. SHEPHERDING THROUGH GROWING INFLUENCE

Parenting through growing influence, not heavy authority

Love

- "Love should be the silver thread that runs through all your conduct. Kindness, gentleness, long-suffering, forbearance, patience, sympathy, a willingness to enter into childish troubles, a readiness to take part in childish joys – these are the cords by which a child may be led most easily, these are the clues you must follow if you would find the way to his heart." - J.C. Ryle
- "The most powerful way to keep your children from being attracted by the offers of camaraderie from the wicked is to make home an attractive place to be. Young people do not run from places where they are loved and know unconditional acceptance. They do not run away from homes where there are solid relationships." - Tedd Tripp
- "The truth is, once my kids hit the teen years, my relationship – good or bad – is the greatest asset or liability I have." - Grant Layman
 - Rules without relationship -> Rebellion
 - Relationship without rules -> Chaos

Example

- "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it..." - 2 Timothy 3:14
- Your children are very perceptive to any trace of hypocrisy – they are studying you.
- What are they observing? What would they say you are most passionate about?
- "Gospel-centered parenting doesn't begin with my proclamation of the gospel. It begins with a consideration of whether I have been transformed by the gospel..." - C.J. Mahaney
- "Gospel-centered parenting begins with authentic example. Not a perfect example, not a flawless example, not a sinless example, but an authentic example. Modeling precedes teaching... Any contradiction between our proclamation and our practice ultimately undermines the authority and the effectiveness of our proclamation. All consistency between proclamation and practice confirms the authenticity of the gospel and promotes the attractiveness of the gospel." - C.J. Mahaney

Humility

Confess your sins (James 5:16)

- “The key to the family functioning as a redemptive community, where the Gospel is the glue that holds the family together, is parents who so trust Christ that they are ready and willing to confess their faults to their children...[P]arents who admit their sin will position themselves to model the Gospel for their children daily.” - Paul Tripp
- “The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.” - 1 Timothy 1:15

Seek counsel (Proverbs 11:14)

- “Remember, it is not your weakness that will get in the way of God’s working through you, but your delusions of strength.” - Paul Tripp

Encouragement

- “Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.” - 1 Thessalonians 5:11
- “Teenagers experience frequent failure. As Christian parents you must become adept at taking your child to the cross to find forgiveness and power to live.” - Tedd Tripp
- Help your children see evidences of God’s grace in their lives.
- “I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus...” (1 Corinthians 1:4)

CONCLUSION

“You have reason for hope as parents who desire to see your children have faith. The hope is the power of the Gospel. The Gospel is suited to the human condition. The Gospel is attractive. God has already shown great mercy to your children. He has given them a place of rich privilege. He has placed them in a home where they have heard His truth. They have seen the transforming power of grace in the lives of His people. Your prayer and expectation is that the Gospel will overcome their resistance as it has yours.” - Tedd Tripp

“And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.” - Genesis 17:7

** This material was adapted from a parenting course written by Greg Somerville, a pastor at Covenant Life Church of Gaithersburg, Maryland (www.covlife.org).*