

Foundations for Parenting

Parenting 6-10, Part 2 Shepherding Methods

INTRODUCTION

“Being a parent means working in God’s behalf to provide direction for your children. Directors are in charge. It involves knowing and helping them to understand God’s standard for children’s behavior. It means teaching them that they are sinners by nature. It includes pointing them to the mercy and grace of God shown in Christ’s life and death for sinners.” - Tedd Tripp

Shepherding our children involves:

- Godly Leadership
- Biblical Instruction
- Loving Correction

I. GODLY LEADERSHIP

We shepherd our children’s hearts with our example.

A. Our Example

“The life classroom is constant, compelling and comprehensive. The same is true of our homes as well. They are environments where our children are constantly learning. Not only that, but we are always teaching our children. Our every response, whether it is instruction or silence, teaches. Our behavior and our love teach.” - Tedd Tripp

Ask yourself:

- Is there any sin I need to acknowledge in my relationships or life?
- Have I demonstrated godliness by the way I have confessed and pursued that sin with the gospel in my life?

“God wants his commands in that place of special privilege. Do you love God? Are you blown away by his Word? Is the awesomeness of God something that your mind keeps turning to? Does the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for your sin dominate the thoughts of your heart? This is the picture of Deuteronomy 6 when it says, ‘these commands are to be upon your hearts.’ What thoughts live in your heart? You know and God knows. Your children know.” - John Younts

Ask your children to evaluate you.

- What do they learn from how you live?
- Are they aware that you are a sinner in the midst of the same sanctification process they are in?

“Your example can have a gracious restraining effect in the lives of your children or it can tempt them to rebellion.” - C.J. Mahaney

- Moral authority is based on trust.
- No matter how much they sin, if you sin, stop and show them how to repent.

B. Our Leadership

1. Prayerfully set your schedule.
 - Run your life. Don't let your life run you.
 - Ask, “What does God want our life together to look like?”
 - Ask, “Where do we invest?”
 - Ask, “When do we rest?”
2. Make time for God and His Word.
 - Make a plan for yourself and your family.
 - Establish the when, where, and what of your devotional lives.
3. Make the local church a family priority.

“Children will be good decision makers as they observe faithful parents modeling and instructing wise direction and decision making on their behalf.” - Tedd Tripp

4. Build relationships with (love) your children.
 - Enjoy your children.
 - Have fun.
 - Make time to just talk.
5. Discipline your children toward godliness.

“Your children are accountable to God for their obedience to you, and you are accountable to God for raising your children to fear him. Therefore your focus in discipline is to hold your children accountable to God.” - John Younts

II. BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION

We shepherd our children's hearts from God's Word.

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

- Deut. 6:4-9

"Never let the watchfulness to check the buddings of evil, and to cherish the first tenderness of right feeling, be relaxed. The ceaseless activity of the great enemy teaches the value of early training. Be beforehand with him. Pre-occupy the ground with good seed, as the most effectual exclusion of his evil tares...Be at the mouth of the way with wholesome food, ere he has the opportunity of pouring in his bread of deceit..." - Charles Bridges

As parents, we want to cast much seed on the ground of our children's hearts.

A. Everyday Talk

"Parents often correct their children from preference and church culture rather than God's Word. The youth ministry is where you see the fruit of that kind of instruction. And the fruit of this kind of instruction is moralism and exasperated teenagers." - Dave Brewer

1. Distinguish between your family rules and God's Word
2. Your concern should be rooted in God's Word
3. Keep your focus on God, not moralism.
4. Don't wait for times of correction to talk about Scripture.

B. Time in God's Word

1. Speak in ways your children can understand.
2. Make times of instruction brief.
3. Use role-plays.
4. Help your children memorize Scripture.
5. Apply the Bible to the issues in your children's lives.
6. Our goal is that we and our children and our grandchildren may fear the Lord, walk in his ways, and enjoy long life. (Deut. 6:2)

III. LOVING CORRECTION

We shepherd our children's hearts through loving discipline.

A. Discipline and Instruction

1. Discipline involves enforcing painful consequences to remind your children that there are consequences for disobeying God.
2. Discipline is corrective and loving, not punitive.
 - "Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him." - Proverbs 13:24
 - "The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother." - Proverbs 29:15
 - "A fool despises his father's instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is prudent." - Proverbs 15:5
 - "Your objective in discipline is to move toward your children, not against them. You move toward them with the reproofs and entreaties of life. Discipline has a corrective objective. It is therapeutic, not penal. It is designed to produce growth, not pain." - Tedd Tripp
3. Spanking should reduce in frequency as you move toward puberty.
4. Disciplinary consequences can vary from child to child.

B. An Illustration

1. An outburst happens on the way to the van after a busy day out of the home
 - Your seven year old and your five year old run to the car and begin to fight over the middle seat in your van.
 - You are exhausted.
 - Their fighting escalates.
 - You stop the fight, get them in their seats, and begin your drive home.
2. You're tempted to say...
 - "How many times have I told you not to fight?"
 - "I've told you a hundred times not to fight!"
 - "Your dad is going to hear about this when he gets home!"
 - "I don't know what else to say to you, you two don't ever seem to get it!"

"You only muddy the waters when the bottom line in discipline is your displeasure over their behavior, rather than God's displeasure with rebellion against His ordained authority." - Tedd Tripp

3. What do you do?

- Stop and get your own heart right.

“If you correct and discipline your children because God mandates it, then you need not clutter up the task with your anger. Correction is not your showing anger for their offenses; it is rather reminding them that their sinful behavior offends God.” - Tedd Tripp

- Remember the desire to get to their hearts.

Rather than simply scolding our children, we need to engage with their hearts.

- Remember God is faithful.
- Remind them of former instruction: “Did we speak about this beforehand? What did dad (or mom) say to you?”
- Help them to understand what they did wrong: “What did you do? Why is that wrong?”
- Move from the “what” to the “why”: “Why did you do what you did? What was it you were wanting? Was that a good desire? What made it wrong?”

“What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.” - James 4:1-3

- “Did you want that more than you wanted to love God and obey mom and dad? How do you know?”
- “Why is that sin? Why does the Bible call that sin? Did you disobey mom and dad and God too?”

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (this is the first commandment with a promise), that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” - Ephesians 6:1-3

- Appropriate discipline and further instruction, taking the opportunity to share the gospel and express your love and forgiveness.
- Repeat one million times.

CONCLUSION

Shepherd Your Children's Hearts

"Teaching your children to live for the glory of God must be your over-arching objective. You must teach your children that for them, as for all of mankind, life is found in knowing and serving the true and living God. The only worthy goal for life is to glorify God and enjoy him forever." - Tedd Tripp

- You must be taking initiative in addressing sin at the heart level if your child is going to be led to conviction.
- Shepherd in the home.
- Shepherd in the community.
- If you are married to a Christian, shepherd together, with the husband's initiative.
- Do you have a gospel motivated, faith filled plan? If not develop a broad plan for your family, including particular training objectives for each child.

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