

Setting Priorities in a Home with Small Children
(from Infants to 5th graders)

A. Chaos and Goal of Parenting:

1. Chaos: Sin

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:6)

Question 16 from New City Catechism: What is sin? Sin is rejecting or ignoring God in the world he created, rebelling against him by living without reference to him, not being or doing what he requires in his law—resulting in our death and the disintegration of all creation. (from New City Catechism)

2. Goal: Present our children mature in Christ

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. (Col. 1:28-29)

B. Things to Know and Remember:

1. The good news of Jesus Christ is the power of God for our children.

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. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:16-17)

a. Jesus is the treasure

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. (Matthew 13:44)

b. God is our children’s hope

c. Consistently call your children to repent and trust in Christ (not just in a one time experience, but in a lifetime of practice.)

2. Children are not the center of the home (God is the head).

But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. (1 Corinthians 11:3)

- a. We don't serve children by placing them at the center.
- b. Sin is living without reference to God in his rightful place.
- c. Children's propensity is to go their own way (be the center of their world).

3. Parental authority has been given by God.

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." Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:1-4)

- a. Our priority is God's will.

"I came to do the will of Him who sent me."

- b. Accept the responsibility God has given you

c. *Parenting* by Tripp, "The word the Bible uses for the intermediary position is ambassador...The only thing an ambassador does is to faithfully represent the message, methods, and character of the leader who has sent him. He is not free to think, speak, or act independently...Parenting is not to be shaped by personal interest, need, or cultural perspective...Parenting is not first about what we want FOR our children or FROM our children, but about what God in grace has planned to do through us IN our children."

4. Personal Pursuit of the Lord is our first priority

Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. (Psalm 90:14)

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. (Deuteronomy 6:4)

Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ (Philippians 3:8)

5. "We parent in the middle of our own sanctification." Paul Tripp

- a. We have the opportunity to live the Gospel out before our children over and over again. "I am my biggest parenting problem. I need rescue from me."
- b. We see ourselves alongside our children in our sanctification. We are sinners in need of Christ's forgiveness and rescue.
- c. Repent and seek forgiveness from your children.

6. Rules and regulations will not change your child's heart.

- a. Where does your confidence rest (In your enforcement of rules or in the God who has given you authority)?
- b. Question 15 from New City Catechism: Since no one can keep the law, what is its purpose? That we may know the holy nature and will of God, and the sinful nature and disobedience of our hearts; and thus our need of a Savior. The law also teaches and exhorts us to live a life worthy of our Savior.
- c. Yes...your children need rules, correction, and discipline.

7. God wants your children to obey you.

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.
(Colossians 3:20)

- a. Practice
- b. Set expectations
- c. Recommend Areas to Train: Material from Brian Chesemore
 - Responding to "no" (remember specific commands)
 - Changing attitude when adjusted
 - Looking in the eyes**
 - Temper tantrums
 - Sitting quietly
 - Greeting adults
 - Practice of worship/prayer
 - Kindness to other children
 - Coming when called
 - Learning to say please/thank you
 - Respect for adults and adult environment. (Not interrupting adults).

C. Practices of Parenting

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)

1. Teach God's Word and Proclaim Christ and his Good News

"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. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

"Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth" (John 17:17)

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 3:14-15)

a. Scripture Memory

b. Catechisms

c. Music

d. Read the Bible

e. Seek routines.

2. Love and Serve your Children

...and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, (Titus 2:4)

But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, [44] and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. [45] For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:43-45)

And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Matthew 22:39)

- a. Seek routines
- b. Time and quality
- c. Be kind
- d. Take joy in your children

3. Correct and Discipline your Children

for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights. (Proverbs 3:12)

“...but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”
(Ephesians 6:4b)

Proverbs 23:13

Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he will not die. (Proverbs 23:13)

God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

- a. To correct and discipline takes time and energy

- I don't discipline strangers. I discipline you because you're my son and I love you.

- b. Not in Anger

...for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.
(James 1:20)

A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.(
Proverbs 15:1)

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

- c. Spanking

“The Rod is a parent, in faith toward God and faithfulness toward his or her children, undertaking the responsibility of careful, timely, measured and controlled use of physical punishment to underscore the importance of obeying God, thus rescuing the child from

continuing in his foolishness until death.” – *Shepherding A Child’s Heart* by Tedd Tripp

d. Correction should engage the heart.

e. Wrong Tools: Fear, Intimidation, Shame, Manipulation

“Parenting is not about exercising power for change in your children. Parenting is about your humble faithfulness in being willing to participate in God’s work of change for the sake of your children.” – *Parenting* by Tripp

f. Point to the promise, power, grace and treasure of Jesus

4. Act in Faith not in Fear or Self-Sufficiency

Romans 14:23

But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. (Romans 14:23)

a. Seek Wisdom and then take action as a step of faith.

b. Pray

5. Use your personal gifts and strengths

6. Seek Counsel

7. Make God’s local church a priority

Resources:

- “Your Child’s Profession of Faith” – Craig Cabaniss’ sermon series on baptism and children (search baptism in audio archives at www.gracechurchfrisco.org)
- *Parenting* by Paul Tripp
- App: Fighter Verses by Desiring God
- App: New City Catechism
- Sovereign Grace Children’s Music
- *Large Family Logistics* by Kim Brenneman
- *Old Story New* by Marty Machowski (Ten minute devotions)