

The 5th Way to Parent, Part 2

I. The Ambassador Parent

- You know what an Ambassador is. When the Ambassador for America visits another country, he isn't there to share his opinions or represent his preferences. He's there to give the best possible impression of his country. Well, that's what we're called to do in our parenting. You weren't made a parent by God so you could rule your own little domain. You are to represent *Him* in your home, speak *His* words in your living, and give the best impression of *His* kingdom that you can.
- I would highly recommend you listen to Episode 7 if you haven't already. That episode is titled "Stop Being the Leader" and it deals with the concept of the First Follower. "The First Follower" perfectly describes The Ambassador because as the First-Follower in her home, the Ambassador's main goal in all she does is to emulate Christ. In Philippians 3:12 Paul exemplifies this idea of the First Follower: "*Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*"
- Also as a First-Follower, the Ambassador sets Christ's example before the people following him. Paul also models this well in I Corinthians 4:16-17 when he says, "*Wherefore I beseech you, **be ye followers of me.** For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus . . . who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.*"
- Paul wanted the church in Corinth to follow him as he followed Christ. In fact, he wanted the people to follow Timothy as Timothy followed Paul as Paul followed Christ. And here's the key difference between the Ambassador and the other 4 parents. The Ambassador Parent has high *biblical* expectations for self and high *biblical* expectations for others.

II. High expectations for others with Christ-like patience

- The Ambassador speaks God's Truth, not their opinions, not their preferences, not their desires. When you delight yourself in the Lord, He gives you your desires, but your desires have then become intrinsically His because He ultimately is your desire. Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments." I desire to do right because I love Him. The Ambassador is motivated by God's purposes and God's glory, not his own. As I mentioned before, it's important to realize that God sets *very high* standards for His people. Again, God commands us in I Peter 1:16, "*Be holy; as I am holy.*"
- The Joker and the Doormat fail because they often do not expect God's highest in others or themselves. And the Dictator fails because though he may have expectations founded in biblical principles, the *motivation* for those expectations grow out of their *own* fleshly desires.
- But the Ambassador has very high expectations for behavior that is governed by *God's will*, not the Ambassador's annoyances. And since God's Word addresses the content of our expectations as well as the purpose of our expectations, the Ambassador lives to not only do right, but to do it for the right reasons.

III. High expectations for others with Christ-like patience

- TLP's theme verse is Ephesians 4:15: "*But speaking truth in love, [we] may grow up into him in all things; which is the head, even Christ.*" Truth without love is a sin, and love without truth isn't love . . . and that's a sin too. We need both.
- The Dictator and the Judge are regularly tempted with unkindness, impatience, pride, and pessimism in their parenting responses. This hurts their ability to influence their children because no one likes submitting to a demi-god. I love the scene from the first avengers movie where Loki, who happens to be a self-proclaimed god, has just been smashed repeatedly into the floor by the Hulk. After thoroughly demolishing Loki and his pride, Hulk utters, "*Puny god.*" **That's what we are.** We are puny gods and our children are not interested in worshipping us. When our personal expectations are the basis for our parenting, we've removed God from the throne of our home and firmly planted our illegitimate rule in his place.
- If you get furious in your parenting, if you become impatient, if you get scared, you can mark it down with 100% biblical certainty that you are not being an Ambassador.
- Because the Ambassador acknowledges that the child's sin is ultimately against God as he doesn't struggle with sinful anger, hurt feelings, or fear in light of the "terrible twos" or "rebellious teens."
- You don't ultimately want obedient children. You want Christ-honoring children. The Ambassador must commit everything to discipleship. No time is his own. No method is his own. His every meal, interaction, and game is dedicated to fulfilling his Lord's great commission. Much effort will be expended to point his children toward Truth both in formal training and informal relating. And when more help is needed than the Ambassador can give without neglecting other equally Christ-honoring responsibilities (like the other children), he will locate another Ambassador whose schedule allows him to invest additional time in the child's life. The beauty of this choice, is that you have God's divine promise of power to accomplish it because you're actually accomplishing your God-given mandate - disciple your children.
- That's not to say that every Ambassador has God-loving children. Yahweh, the perfect Father had children who rebelled - the nation of Israel. But by being the 5th Parent - the Ambassador Parent, at least you're not getting in the way. Instead you're creating an atmosphere conducive to genuine spiritual growth within the soil of redemptive relationships.