

# The Most Beautiful Part of Parenting

## I. The Icing on the Cake

- Most of the moments for which parents live are not the purpose of their parenting.
- The real reason God gave your children to you is that there's something *desperately* wrong that needs to be fixed. There's something ugly and painful and destructive that needs your attention. There will be day-by-day, moment-by-moment crises that require your involvement. Yet most parents despise this part of parenting.
- When our kids become rebellious, when they embarrass us in public, those are the moments we're tempted to complain, gossip about our kids, and even slander them to our friends. And some parents become so fed up, they check-out. Some pack up and leave. And the rest of us are so easily aggravated and annoyed by these moments that we do everything we can to just survive them and move on as quickly as possible.

## II. The Most Glorious Relationship in the Universe

- The most beautiful relationship is not perfect man and perfect God.
- The most beautiful relationship is a perfect relationship between a perfect God and an imperfect man. The relationship we can have with God now . . . after sin, is more glorious than the relationship Adam and Eve had with God. It's the difference between how you feel about about food immediately after a massive Thanksgiving meal and how you feel about that same food after a week of fasting. What once was taken for granted — and was even distasteful — has now become cherished.
- Ephesians 2:1-10; I John 4:9-10; Romans 8:38-39

## III. The Most Gorgeous Task Sinful Man can Have

- II Corinthians 5:17-21
- This great Gospel not only reconciles us to God, but it also makes it possible for us to be His Ambassadors.
- The most glorious thing you can ever do for your kids is be used as a channel through which God draws your children to Him. We have the joyous privilege and responsibility to be used by God to help reconcile our children to Him.
- If our most glorious and beautiful calling is to be used as a tool to help our children be reconciled to God . . . then we must acknowledge that our most beautiful parenting moments will be the ones when we are fully engaged in Gospel reconciliation and Ambassadorial Parenting.
- But this is the hard part of parenting.
  - We'd be more than happy to be a glorified babysitter.
  - Though we'd never really say it this way, we'd rather not have to point our kids to Christ. We'd rather we didn't have to be used by God to convict them. Teaching and interpreting and counseling and training are things we'd avoid if we have the choice.
  - If we had a parenting genie, our first wish is that our kids would just be "good." We don't want them getting into trouble. We don't want to have to talk about sex. We don't want to referee another argument. We don't want to have another debate over vegetables, phone usage, money expenditures, bad grades, bad music, or bad friends. We don't want any more disobedience, rebelliousness, defiance, angst, arguments, or terrorism.
  - We want peace. We want joy. We want fun. And — deep down inside — we believe the most beautiful parenting moments are the moments we're *not* parenting.

## I. Ambassadorial Parenting is the Most Beautiful Part of Parenting

- What if we saw those hard conversations and those hours upon hours of repetition for what they really are? Those are our most Ambassadorial opportunities we have. Those are the moments ripe for reconciliation. Those are the very reasons God put you into the life of your kids.
- We wrongly view parenting (or the best parts of parenting) as the simple education and guidance through the logistics of life (colors, relationships, money). But the beauty and majesty and privilege of parenting is guiding our kids through the *struggles* of life.
- You will never enjoy the momentary view from atop a prestigious mountain range without the multiple-day, death-defying ascent. The view is for a moment, but the journey took everything we had. This is why only people who love the climb undertake the journey. And it's why they're the only ones who get to see the view.
- We will never have Christ-honoring kids if we don't parent their sin and introduce them to Christ. We will never have God say of our parenting, "Well done, my good and faithful servant," if we don't use the daily struggles and conflicts and disobedience to point our children to Christ.
- Our children may not submit to their Creator if we don't take full advantage of their poor choices and Failure Philosophies to show them that they are puny gods in need of perfect a Heavenly Father.
  - Now, God is gracious. I'm not suggesting that if you embrace the right kind of suffering, you're guaranteed to stare out over the gorgeous vista that is spiritually victorious children. Parenting is not a formula. God is also gracious that He calls and justifies and sanctifies our kids even when we did a really bad job. When we were all enamored with the pleasure and trying to avoid the pain, He was doing the work in which He invited us to participate.
  - But the reality still stands that God desires for us to be ministers of reconciliation, to be used as heralds of the Good News, to participate with Him in the maturing of our kids.
- What is the most beautiful part of parenting? I believe it's the conversations we don't normally like to have. It's the consequences we don't want to give. It's the constant reminders we don't want to repeat. It's the daily Truth in Love that God wants to use to mature our children in Christ. In those moments we are a vital part of God's redemptive Gospel story. The Lord has allowed us to play a part in the reconciliation of our kids.
- God gives parents the grand and glorious privilege of being part of the awesome plan — devised in eternity past — to pour God's infinite love on underserving wretches. That is the most beautiful part of our parenting.
- When your kids are arguing in the next room, that's a moment for you to participate in the most amazing job you could desire. When your child throws her food on the floor, that's a gorgeous time to point her to Christ. When you discover your son is addicted to pornography, that's God's blessing on you and your family. That's a divine opportunity for you to be an Ambassador Parent. Ambassadors don't hang out in their home towns. They go to places far away from their comfort. Ambassador Parenting is going to call us into dirty back alleys and desperate ghettos. But the fact that God has tasked us to bring light and purity and Good News to those wrecked locales is what makes the calling so beautiful.