

## Parenting Like the Rich Young Ruler

### I. God has given us children who want to know how they too can have eternal life.

- Regardless of whether or not I'm born again or whether or not my parenting is defensible, my children are on a life-long search for satisfaction. And — Lord willing — they will look to me for the answers.
- Whether they ask outright, or whether I get to introduce them to genuine satisfaction as I watch them stumble toward experiences that will only hurt them, God has put me into my kids life to introduce them to Him and His life eternal. Call it Evangelism Parenting, call it Deuteronomy 6 Parenting, it's the highest calling we have.
- But we all make a daily, moment-by-moment choice whether we're going to sacrificially give our Scriptural riches away or whether we're going to keep it from our kids.

### II. God has given Christian parents riches beyond compare, and He expects us to pour it into our parenting.

- All day, every day, our children ask us how they can have eternal life. Sometimes they actually ask it with their words, but most of the time their behavior betrays the fact that they're selfishly living for their own pleasure. They may not be asking about it, but they are definitely looking for it.
- We can either respond like Jesus, and consistently bring them back to Truth in love, or we can bury the Biblical riches at our disposal. We can do this in a number of ways:
  - We ignore our kids. We pretend like we can't see or hear what's going on because we don't want to have to deal with it. We know the Bible addresses their behaviors and their hearts, but we just don't want to have to parent right now.
  - We demand our kids worship us. Instead of telling our kids that no one is good but God and they need to rely on Him for salvation, we make ourselves and our desires the standard of goodness in our homes by saying things like, "Why can't you give me some peace and quiet for just 5 minutes?"
  - We substitute the counterfeit riches of this world for the genuine riches of God. Instead of answering our children's need with God's perfect philosophy of life, we lean hard on the Failure Philosophies of the world.
- Yet regardless of which tact we take, we're ignoring the treasure trove of infinite wisdom in God's Word. We're refusing to give them the answers they really need.

### III. Parenting out of the riches of God will often result in children who reject the Gospel, but parenting out of the stinginess of self produces children who think they're embracing the Gospel just fine.

- If I can ignore my kids or I can get them to submit to my desires or I can manage my home on the superficial parenting methods of our day, then two things have happened: A. I've exercised only the smallest amount of parenting energy, and B. I've created an atmosphere that deceives me and my family that everything is okay.
  - If I ignore my kids because I believe the issue isn't big enough to address.
  - As long as I get my way as a parent, how bad can it be?!
  - When I snag the low-hanging, man-centered fruit of secular methodology, I'm actually encouraging my kids to worship self . . . which they are more than happy to do.

- Explanation And everything seems fine. We can focus on dinner and soccer and watching moves and mowing the lawn because we've convinced ourselves that there are either no big issues with our kids or we believe we've addressed it enough.
- From our kids' perspective, if mom and dad are ignoring us, what we're doing is fine. If I can just speak and act in a way that keeps dad and mom from giving me consequences, all is well. Of course, we love it when our parents use parenting techniques they learned online because it gives us the freedom we want to live the way we feel is right. And everything is fine.
- And when we do that, we're actually creating Rocky and Thorny-Hearted kids. We've all bought into the delusion that everything is just peachy.
- But what happens when the Truth and Love of God's Word comes into our lives?
  - It's confusing to our Hard-Hearted kids. It's convicting to our Rocky-Hearted kids, and it's annoying to our Thorny-Hearted kids.
  - God created the Bible to teach us, reprove us, correct us, and train us, and those are difficult processes because they rub our sinful flesh raw and call us to follow Christ instead of self.
- So, when Jesus poured out the divine riches of Truth in order to show the Rich Young Ruler that he couldn't rely on his good works but instead needed to deny the false god of himself, he was saddened because he wanted eternal life on his own terms. He left. And Jesus watched him go.
- Jesus could have told the man that he was just fine. He had kept "all" the commandments and didn't need to do anything else. The young man would have been happy, and the two could have gone on to any other number of things because the spiritual issues were taken care of.
- But it would have been false and hateful for Jesus to lie to him like that. But it was his choice to accept or reject the riches Jesus lavished on him . . . and he chose the latter.
- When you invest biblical Truth into your kids, it will convict them. They may accept it, but they may also reject it.

**We parent like the Rich Young Ruler when we refuse to use God's Word in our parenting. When we don't teach our kids from the Bible, reprove them with the Bible, counsel them in the Bible, and train them with the Bible, we're disobeying God. We're leading our kids away from life eternal, and we ourselves are refusing to act like someone who truly is born again.**

**Instead, let's do the right thing no matter how hard it may be. Let's parent like Christ. Let's speak the Truth in love at every opportunity. Let's not ignore sin. Let's not set our own opinions and desires up as the most important standard for our kids. Let's not waste our parenting opportunities spouting the godless lies of the world.**

**Let's parent in Christ.**