

Biblical Parenting Essentials, Part 1 | the content of your parenting

I. God wants you to be His Ambassador.

- Matthew 5:13-16; Matthew 28:19-20; II Corinthians 5:18-21; Colossians 1:16-18
- The biggest reason you are alive today is that God wants you to be speaking into your family's lives so that they can better know and understand Him. That means that you and I have the exact same responsibility on this earth as Jesus Christ had. Jesus came to reconcile mankind to God, and God has committed to us the same word of reconciliation.
 - The Centrality of the God
 - The Centrality of Scripture
 - The Centrality of the Gospel
- We need to talk about God, His Word, and the eternally relevant and practical realities of the Gospel in all of our parenting. Whether we're getting the kids ready for bed, talking about homework, discussing their friend troubles, working on chores together, we need to give God the preeminence in our conversations.
- You and your kids were created for Him and through Him. You hold together because of Him. He is supposed to be your head, and He is supposed to have first place in everything in your home. You are to be His Ambassador in your home. His Word is the only thing in this world that provides us everything we need for life and godliness. How can we argue that God doesn't have to be the overwhelming sum of our conversations? Not only does He deserve to have first place in our parenting, but it doesn't make sense to exclude Him. But God's not going to force you.

II. You need to choose to be His Ambassador.

- **You need to be in relationship with God.**
 - As nebulous as some people may make that sound, please understand that God defines what it is to be in a relationship with Him. You are either His enemy or His child. And you don't become His child however you want. You must believe what He says in His Word about your sin and His salvation.
- **You need to be maturing in your relationship with God.**
 - We need to be growing and maturing and developing in all the same ways our kids need to be growing and maturing and developing. That's not to say that we are as immature as they are, but it's to say that we need to continue growing in the same *categories*.
- When you submit to God's call on your life, the content of your parenting will make sense and come more easily as you practice using it.

III. To be a biblical parent you need to make God, the Scripture, and the Gospel the main content of your parenting.

- **Talking about God as you Parent**
 - **We need to talk about God in times of Rebellion.**
 - For the professing, church-going Christian, it's these times where wielding the Scriptures is easiest, but generally not for a good reason. Too many Christians use God and the Bible as a way to scare or manipulate their kids into obedience.
 - We need to talk about God the way Jesus talked about the Father. God deserves our worship and obedience. Our children's sin is not about our inconvenience or our dislikes or our discomfort or our wishes, it's about depriving God of the righteous, holy worship that He absolutely deserves.

- This kind of talk reminds children who have not submitted to God in salvation to see His status and His just desserts. And it reminds born again children of their higher calling.
- **We need to talk about God in times of Obedience.**
 - You will never experience a greater temptation to stop parenting than when your kids are being good. It's our natural predisposition to pull out and view parenting as a spectator sport when everything seems to be "going well."
 - We need to speak of God when our kids do right. We need to talk about how that attitude, word, or behavior pleases the Lord.
 - The other reason we don't speak of God in times of obedience is that we forget that no one is perfect and we all need to be growing.
- **We need to talk about God in times of Discomfort.**
 - Romans 8:28-29; James 1:2-4; II Corinthians 4:7-18; Philippians 4:4-9; I Peter 1:7
 - Like the times of Rebellion, this is a time that God's people often shine. They remind themselves and others about the goodness, love, and provision of God. And that is exactly what we need to be doing. We need to fill our parenting with God-content, and that's just as true in the difficult, uncomfortable times as any.
 - Discomfort is not to be hated; it's something that is to drive us to God.
- **We need to talk about God in times of Comfort.**
 - Proverbs 30:8-9
 - This is probably the easiest time to have godless parenting content. It is so easy for us to sit back and enjoy the blessings of God all the while somehow forgetting that He was the one who gave them to us. We're so myopic and ridiculous, we actually think the times of Comfort are a result of our making.
 - In such times we need to praise God. We need to thank Him and speak of Him often with our kids so that they too see Him as the sole provider and source of all satisfaction in this life.
- **Talking about the Scripture as you Parent**
 - **We need to talk about the Scripture in times of Rebellion.**
 - Far too many young people in the church know about God, but they're so ignorant of what the Bible says. It really is amazing.
 - We need to teach our rebellious kids that God's Word is their only hope for change and joy. It's in the pages of the Scriptures that God gives us everything we need for life and godliness. Only as we open the Bible to address our sinful hearts will we find the practical answers we need for real maturity.
 - **We need to talk about the Scripture in times of Obedience.**
 - God forbid our kids only think the Bible has something to say when they're in trouble. No, it actually has more to say when they're not! The Bible is designed to help us daily grow in our spirituality in conformity to Christ.
 - Remind your kids as breakfast of how the Lord would have them do all to His glory today. Point their eyes back to Christ when they're feeling overwhelmed with homework. Encourage them to love their siblings better and better. Put them to bed reflecting on God's love and providential care.
 - **We need to talk about the Scripture in times of Discomfort.**
 - Teach your kids that God's Word is the only thing that can guide us securely through times of distress and disappointment. It's not a talisman, it's the perfect, impeccable, loving, relevant, and practical book through which the Lord speaks and guides us to His glory.

- **We need to talk about the Scripture in times of Comfort.**
 - Your kids need to know that the Bible will help them answer any questions they may have about life and godliness. It will help them make choices about their family, friends, entertainment, school, work, future spouse, the questions they receive from their coworkers, absolutely everything.
 - But if we're not talking about God's Word as we plan a vacation or choose what show to watch or play in the yard or choose the classes we're going to take or do our chores or play sports, then how will they learn that the Scripture is important during all of those times because God is important during all of those times?
- **Talking about the Gospel as you Parent**
 - **We need to talk about the Gospel in times of Rebellion.**
 - The Gospel saves us. It saves us positionally from God's present and future wrath, but it also saves us from ourselves. It's designed to change us. Any and all beneficial change in the life of our kids will be a result of the Gospel.
 - We want our unbelieving children to embrace God's gift of justification. We want them to see that the trouble they're in now is a result of them trying to be the god of their own lives. We want them to see that the Lord wants to save them from themselves and the consequences of worshipping themselves.
 - But the same is true for our born again kids. The Gospel is not a one-time in the past experience. Our sanctification is a daily experience in which we submit to the Holy Spirit and are conformed into the image of Christ.
 - Our Rebellious kids who profess faith in Christ need to be confronted with the fact that their life choices are diametrically opposed to the new life they say they have. They need to submit to God's Gospel plan for their lives.
 - **We need to talk about the Gospel in times of Obedience.**
 - It's so easy for all of us to see our good choices and beneficial decisions as being because we're good, decent, wonderful people. But the reality is that everything good in us is a result of God's grace. We can only ever take credit for the bad stuff.
 - Therefore, we need to celebrate God's grace in our kids' lives when they live in obedient submission to us and — ultimately — God. We need to teach our kids about His grace and help them see it in their continued maturity. We need to praise Him for working in all of our lives. We need to recognize that where we are now is a result of the Gospel work God is doing in our family.
 - **We need to talk about the Gospel in times of Discomfort.**
 - God wants to use the discomfort to further conform us into His image. In fact, Christians tend to grow by leaps and bounds in times of persecution and pain. When we submit to God's will and working in our lives, it's walking through the Valley of the Shadow of Death that can radically ramp up our spiritual maturity.
 - But we parents need to be talking about that. We need to believe and be growing in that belief. It needs to be a resounding anthem in our daily parenting that God has a plan, is working, and can be trusted.
 - **We need to talk about the Gospel in times of Comfort.**
 - We should be so focused on and enamored by the Gospel that we interpret every moment of our day through its lens. When life is going the way we would have planned, we need to recognize that God is in control. He knows that this is what we need, but He also knows that we will only grow in our sanctification as we praise Him for the blessings and keep our eyes on His glory instead of consuming the blessings for our own selfish pleasures.