

Biblical Parenting Essentials, Phase 4 | evaluation

I. Are you speaking the truth in love for the glory of God?

- The truth is the content from God's Word which is in line with His meaning and interpretation—to the best of your ability.
- The love is the method. Since you only want God's best interest for your kids, you will communicate with them and interact with them by only giving them the best that God would have you give them. This—of course—doesn't mean that everything you say and do is comfortable and syrupy. No! Many times your kids are going to need chastisement, reproof, admonishment, rebuke, and the like. But the manner of those times must be the love of God.
- And the glory of God is the motivation. To many of us parent to achieve our own wishes and desires. I know I've done that, and I still do that far too often. But as I mentioned earlier, our parenting must be an act of worship to God for His sole honor and glory.
- So, that needs to be in place if you want to know if you're in the Training Phase of Biblical Parenting. But—as I'm sure you all remember—unless your kid is there with you . . . you're not training, you're simply teaching.

II. Are they growing in the character of Christ?

- We start with this point because the following two points are completely *vain* and *worthless* if they are not firmly rooted in this point.
- We humans are so incredibly superficial. We're all like impersonators who are really good at putting on an external show, a facade of righteousness, superficial obedience, and freckle-deep morality. But mere outward pretense is not the product of true spiritual life.
- Three times in the Gospels we read Jesus' Parable of the Soils.
 - The Rocky Soil represents an intellectual, outward conformity to a system. Jesus described it as a seed that fell on shallow, well-watered ground, but because there was nowhere to put down any real roots, all the plant's energy was invested in upward growth. Such plants often grow taller and bushier faster than all the others who are developing solid root systems.
 - But then Jesus said that when the drought because of the Word comes into their lives, they are the quickest to wither and die because the ground dried up and they didn't have a root system deep in the moisture rich soil.
 - These Rocky Hearted Children never produce fruit of repentance, and the superficial rocks of intellectual assent and theoretical acquiescence leave them spiritually dead regardless of how they look on the outside.
 - Therefore, no matter what is said in the next few points, even if your child were the best actor on the planet and they could play-act all the right words and deeds, they would still be spiritually dead. They'd be just like the pharisees—beautiful on the outside, but full of dead men's bones. Their "obedience" would be hypocritical and empty.
- If they truly are being transformed into the image of Christ by maturing in His character, they are definitely participating in the Training Phase with you.
- How are you to be able to tell? You need to trust God on this one, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't do the careful observation, investigation, and—dare I say it—*interrogation* necessary to know their hearts. Remember Proverbs 20:5, "*A plan in the heart of a man is like deep water, But a man of understanding draws it out.*"
- We need to be parents of observation, investigation, and interrogation.
- Merriam-Webster defines interrogation as "a formal and systematic questioning."

- But being a parent requires that we be more than observers. We need to be investigators who scour the information at hand, probe, and ask questions. And when it comes to asking questions, we need to be interrogators who can—by the grace of God and to His glory—draw out the plan in our children's hearts.

III. Are they speaking the words of Christ?

- Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Ephesians 4:5 command us to speak the truth in love. We are not only expected to speak that which is true regardless of whether or not we have recorded evidence that Jesus said it, but we're also to make the entirety of the Scriptures part of our interactions with people.
- That means that it's completely acceptable for us to expect that our kids speak the Word in their daily lives. We all quote movies, song lyrics, and authors all the time. We all talk about what's important to us. So, why don't we and our kids quote the Scriptures more often? We don't because we're not as conformed to the character of Christ as we should be.
- Spiritually mature individuals don't just talk about truth with those who are more mature than they are, they talk about truth with those who are less spiritually mature than they are.
- It may be evangelistically, it may be in discipleship, it may be answering a question or simply encouraging someone, but believers who are being shaped into the image of Christ are going to talk about the things that are important to Him. They're going to be salt and light. They're going to be discipling. They're going to have more mature believers from whom they're learning, similarly mature believers they're sharpening, and less mature believers they're teaching.
- This is how God created humans to function. When we're passionate about something, we talk about it, we even go so far as to try to convince others about it.

IV. Are they doing the deeds of Christ?

- Only when we conform to the character of Christ and speak the words of Christ can we be certain that our actions will also be in conformity to Christ.
- Doing isn't good enough. The doing must be motivated by God, and that only comes as we are genuinely conformed to the character of Jesus.
- This is not a suggestion that your kids need to participate in the supernatural deeds of Christ. This is not a call to perform miracles, speak in tongues, prophesy, or cast out demons. This is a call to serve, minister, help, lead, obey the Father, and sacrifice the way Jesus did.
- Do your kids serve others? Are they hospitable? Do they go out of their way to help people? Do they sacrifice? Do they do the will of their Father Who's in heaven? Is their life characterized by giving? Would the people who know them best say that they prefer others above themselves and outdo others in showing honor?
- If they are truly growing in the character of Christ, they will serve as He served, they will love as He loved. John 13:2-6
- The reality is that a life that belongs to Christ is going to be transformed into His image from one degree of glory to another. They're going to mature in the character of Christ, they're going to speak the words of Christ, and they're going to live like Christ.