

# How to Know If You Need Help in Your Parenting

## I. Are you experiencing angst in your parenting?

- This should be a dead giveaway, but we've all likely been convinced that parenting is hard no matter what we do, so the fact that we're struggling doesn't motivate us to look for help.

## II. Have your kids started doing things that surprise you?

- If your children—regardless of their age—are doing, saying, feeling, thinking, wanting, or believing things that surprise you, perhaps a couple things might be true.
  - You might have been missing something.
  - Maybe you weren't blindsided, but if what the kids are doing surprises you, then perhaps it would be wise to get some insight so that the surprise doesn't continue.

## III. Are you reading parenting books or listening to parenting podcasts or attending parenting conferences?

- Sometimes parents—even the prideful ones—will pursue parenting help through books and podcasts because they recognize that they need help, however, we should be wise enough to realize that non-personalized help isn't nearly as valuable as personalized help.
- If we're combing the internet looking for answers from strangers about how to handle our kids, we need to recognize the fact that personalized assistance has far greater chances of helping the situation.

## IV. Are your children changing?

- What's interesting is that we understand the significance of change when our kids are very young. We diligently track their milestones, and we research upcoming changes to be ready for the next needs our children are going to have. But as our kids get older, we become less diligent about looking forward to the next developmental stages, temptations, and possible pitfalls.
- There are three types of changes for which we should be looking.
  - **Are they changing behaviorally?**
    - One of the best ways to spot an addiction is to look for changes . . . changes that likely will not seem like a significant problem or even appear to be related to the addiction.
    - When children start changing in how they relate to family members, the quality of their schooling, how they dress, talk, or eat, and countless other seemingly insignificant changes, it might be a revelation about a new addiction.
  - **Are they changing spiritually?** This again should be one of the things that drives us to look for assistance, and it's not just when our kids seem to be acting more immaturely. Even the morphing spiritual change that appears to be the result of maturity is something that should cause us to pursue advice concerning valuable ways to guide them into this new season of their lives.
  - **Are they changing physically?** Very young children appear to change much faster, but noticeable physical changes in any of our kids is a revelation that our kids are entering new phases. They will be experiencing new influences and temptations, they will be capable of different decision making, and—in some cases—their physical changes are actually the result of poor spiritual choices.

## V. Are you finite?

- If you're finite, that means that you're not perfect, that you're a sinner, and that you don't know everything you need to know.

## VI. Do you have children?

- It's true, if you have kids, you need help in your parenting.

## VII. Concluding Thoughts

- **No one is saying that you can't parent your kids on your own or that it takes a village to raise children or anything like that.**
- **Since it would be wise for all of us to seek help in our parenting, we need to carefully choose the most beneficial help.**
  - **There is value in books and podcasts.**
    - Biblically-rooted material can always be beneficial, but the best podcasts and books are still not personalized.
    - The best parenting book can be more valuable as someone helps you apply it to your situation in the best way possible.
  - **There is value in counseling from people who don't know you.** There is great help to be had in counseling from people who don't do life with you. But, that doesn't mean there aren't more beneficial types of help.
  - **The most valuable help is found in counseling from people who do life with you.** When we are getting our parenting help from people who actually see us as we parent, that person has a better chance of understanding the situation and offering assistance that will be the most beneficial.
  - **The only valuable counseling absolutely needs to be rooted in the Scripture.**
    - The best counsel is going to come from someone who intimately knows the Bible, lives a Christ-honoring life, and knows you well, but sometimes it's really hard to find a person who fits into all three of those categories. There are plenty of people who know things about the Bible, but they don't live it. And there are also many people who know and live the Scriptures who don't know or do life with us. So, what do you do?
    - A podcast that is thoroughly biblical is much better than a doctrinally unsound pastor or a close friend who's immaturely following the trends of the world.
    - The most important aspect of the counseling must be its submission to the practical application of biblical principles. Second to that is how well the individual knows us.
- Tim Challies' Article "The Parenting Book Too Few Parents Read"
  - "Do not be easily impressed by people whose children are still young."
  - "Look for people in your church whose older children are living the way you'd hope your children will someday live."
  - "Be wary of people whose egos are tied closely to their children."
  - "As you speak to exemplary parents, also speak to their exemplary children."
  - "Don't fall into the trap of thinking that just because older parents raised their children many years ago and in a different cultural context, their counsel is no longer valuable."