



How Do We Best Support Our Kids Through Their Hardest Times?

Isaiah 50:7: (NASB) *For the Lord GOD helps me, therefore, I am not disgraced; Therefore, I have set my face like flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed.*



Parenting is a difficult and often unpredictable task. In our last episode, we laid a scripturally principled foundation for managing our parental “WHAT IFs” and imperfections. We also addressed the ever-present challenge of growing confidence and competence in our children as we slowly release our parental control over them. With all of this in place, it is now time to delve into several of the hard and practical matters of bringing up children. The fact is the structure of our present society extols a path and process of child rearing that is often fundamentally opposed to true Christian beliefs. This leaves us with a lot of questions that may be hard to answer as we seek to apply principles of godliness. The good news is, no matter the question, there is always clear Bible-based instruction available.

We will be addressing four practical parenting questions:

1. How do we teach our younger children to love God?
2. How do we keep our relationships with our kids throughout adulthood?
3. When bad things DO happen to our kids, how do we cope?
4. How do we handle our rebellious adolescents?

QUESTION #1

How do we -
in a very practical way -
teach our younger children
to love God?

In these next verses, the Apostle Peter is telling us that our heavenly call and privilege are dependent upon how we live our lives.

Teach

In principle, practically teaching our younger children at home should be based on the very characteristics Peter is teaching:

2 Peter 1:5-7: (NASB) *⁵Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, ⁶and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, ⁷and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.*

Let's break down all these characteristics and see how they apply to parents toward instructing their children.

Applying all diligence:

Let's work at raising our children! Decide that high standards are the only standards:

Psalms 101:2-3: (NASB) *²I will give heed to the blameless way. When will You come to me? I will walk within my house in the integrity of my heart. ³I will set no worthless thing before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not fasten its grip on me.*



ENCOURAGE our children to be strong in what we are teaching them to stand for because the odds against them are difficult.

In your faith supply moral excellence:

Let's shower our children with input and stimulation that teaches truth, honor and purity, using standards of godliness and not worldliness:

Philippians 4:8: (NASB) *Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.*

BE AN EXAMPLE and give examples of the moral high road we are trying to walk, and the victories that come with that walk. This is difficult in this world.

In your moral excellence, knowledge:

Let's teach our children God's word, laws and truth in a practical way so they can see how it applies to and enhances every aspect of life:

Deuteronomy 6:7-9: (NASB) *⁷You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. ⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. ⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

EXCITE them with your own enthusiasm about learning God's word and ways. Show them what loving God means.

We asked one of our CQ team members, Melinda, who has five children between the ages of three and thirteen how she teaches her children to love God.



To know God is to love Him. It is not meaningful to a child to tell them to love God. They are told all day what to do and how to do it. Throughout their day we relay Bible stories and praise God. We pray with them. Scriptures are placed around the house as touchstones. We play music that is Christ- and God-centered. We try to live a life of gratitude and remember to thank God throughout the day. God will use our shortcomings and mistakes for His glory. Just keep trying to do the next right thing to bring glory and honor to God and Jesus.



Melinda and her husband make godliness a natural part of their everyday life.

In your knowledge, self-control:

Let's teach our children the hidden value of delayed gratification:

1 Corinthians 9:24-25: (NASB) *²⁴Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. ²⁵Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.*

PRACTICE - work on and reward self-controlled behavior.



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WHAT IS SELF CONTROL?
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Little kids want what they want when they want it. We teach the littlest ones in our house patience. When they get all excited about wanting something now, we slowly say, “I (long pause)... will (long pause)... be (long pause)... patient!” They laugh and say it again. We practice having self-control.

When our kids learn patience, it takes away their anxiety. It takes away OUR anxiety as parents, too!

In your self-control, perseverance:

Let’s teach our children the hidden value of never giving up on those things that have lasting value:

1 Corinthians 9:26-27: (NASB) ²⁶Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; ²⁷but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.



The preparation and follow through of the Christian is compared to that of an athlete.

REINFORCE that hard effort brings satisfaction and results. Sometimes those results are delayed, but it is well worth it. Athletes understand they have to practice. They spend much more time on the practice field and in the weight room than they do in the actual competition. This is how we excel.

In your perseverance, godliness (piety, reverence toward God):

Let’s teach our children that a “God first” approach to our everyday activities sets in us a positive attitude, which makes everything better:

1 Timothy 6:6-7: (NASB) ⁶But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. ⁷For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.

It is interesting how these qualities go from perseverance to godliness. Perseverance is this all-out effort, whereas godliness seems like this peaceful way of being. This is the result we want our children to learn - that hard effort yields a peaceful existence. If we do not teach them godliness they are not going to learn it out in the world or anyplace else except with us. The world does not respect godliness!



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TEACH, reteach and repeat how to honor God first. Lead by example.

Our “compass” of conscience should daily point north to where God dwells. When it does not, it needs refocusing. Most kids leave their compass at home.



Periodically, we need to look around for opportunities to show our children diligence, perseverance, moral excellence and godliness. How can we excite our children in learning new knowledge of the LORD? How are we demonstrating self-control? Do we show them how to practice it? Are we reinforcing these concepts, teaching and reteaching?

In your godliness, brotherly kindness:

Let's teach our children the power of mutual respect, manners and giving others honor:

Romans 12:10: (NASB) *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor...*

When we teach our children to share, take turns and be respectful, this is teaching kindness. It is a valuable lesson for everyone.

PRAISE them for kindness, gentleness and patience towards their peers and others. It feels good to be good.

In your brotherly kindness, love:

Let's teach our children the profound value of selfless love:

1 Peter 4:8: (NASB) *Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.*

CELEBRATE selfless thoughts and actions! If our children do something selflessly, remind them that they did what Jesus would have done. The celebration helps them understand this is a good thing they have done, and now they can feel good about being selfless. It is a beautiful gift to give.

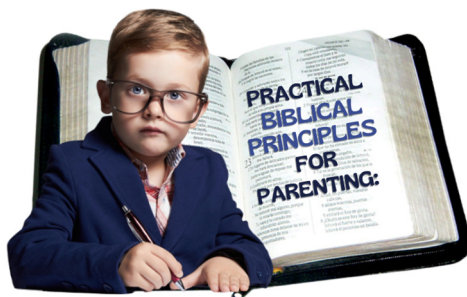


One of the greatest feelings I had when I was a kid was helping others. Let's teach this gift of helping others to our children.

Jesus loved and appreciated children:

Mark 10:13-14: (NASB) ¹³*And they were bringing children to him so that he might touch them; but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, Permit the children to come to me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.*

He wanted to hold them close to love them. The love of God would have poured out of Jesus as God's son, to show these children how special they were. How special do we make our children feel?



We need to provide our young children with strong modeling and overwhelming support to enable them to begin to learn to love God. Remember, children follow what we do more than what we say. Show your love for God daily and teach them to do the same.

Let the joy of teaching our children who God is and how much He loves us be a tool of inspiration to just keep going.



Are there secrets to maintaining a God-honoring relationship with our kids as they grow and change?

For most of us, the beginning stages of parenting can be overwhelming. As we finally figure it out, our kids grow, change and become more independent. Just when we thought we had it, we have to adjust! Because all children are so different, our adjustments need to be focused on filling their needs with biblical principles. Nothing new - just a new way to observe and apply!

QUESTION #2

How do we keep open and honest relationships with our children as they become young adults and beyond?

In Episode 1238: "Is Parental Discipline of Our Children a Thing of the Past?" we talked a lot about going from **PARENTAL CONTROL** when they are very young to **MUTUAL COMPETENCE** when they are learning how to accept responsibility. This is a primary foundation for maintaining an honest and open relationship with our children. Recognizing their budding competence means we **LISTEN** to them, **ACKNOWLEDGE** what they say and **ACT** on it.



Many years ago I was the director of a Bible Youth Camp. One year, the teenagers seemed to be all about themselves. We wanted to find a way to bring them into the fold to be a part of the larger group. We had a problem with tents and bugs, and they were complaining. We had a staff meeting and decided this needed to be fixed. One thing I noticed was that the kids had some good ideas. I told the staff that we were going to let the kids give us some ideas to help us fix the problem. We announced what the problem was and asked the kids for their help. The hands went up, and we received some good answers. They did have the answers! The next thing I said was, "Great ideas - can you do it for us?" And they shouted, "YES!" We now had this project headed up by the teenagers, and it changed their attitude. We built a relationship by listening and working alongside them.

LISTEN, ACKNOWLEDGE and ACT!

Listen

How do we hone our ability to listen to our children? Listen for guidance from above:

James 1:19-22: (NASB) ¹⁹*This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; ²⁰for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. ²¹Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. ²²But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.*

Open and honest parent/child relationships grow in the fertile ground of parental humility before God. Even if their thoughts and expressions are emotional, flighty, morally shaky, angry or selfish, listen and affirm where they are.



Think about us going to God in prayer - we sometimes are emotional, flighty, morally unstable, angry or selfish - and yet we have faith that He hears us. We want our children to have faith in us the way we have faith in God.

Acknowledge

Our acknowledgment of our children's questions and expressions does not mean we agree if something is off.

It does mean we pay attention - close attention - so we can understand them and they know we are trying to understand them. Our responses to their questions and expressions need clear framing. The principles of this next scripture help with this.

First, there is input from our children about something important.

Acknowledge the input:

Deuteronomy 6:20-25: (NIV) ²⁰*In the future, when your son asks you, What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the LORD our God has commanded you?*

We want to be able to answer whatever our children ask, including, "Why are we different from others as Christians?"

Second, focus on an honest answer, stated as completely as is appropriate for the circumstance:

²¹*tell him: We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. ²²Before our eyes the LORD sent signs and wonders—great and terrible—on Egypt and Pharaoh and his whole household. ²³But He brought us out from there to bring us in and give us the land He promised on oath to our ancestors.*

The answer was not, "We do these things because God told us to; now obey." It was, "Let me tell you about our heritage. Let me tell you about the hardships of slavery under Pharaoh."

We should tell our kids about our Christian journey and a detailed background of why we stand where we stand. This helps them realize how important they are to us.

Third, continue to acknowledge their input by carefully concluding your perspective:

²⁴*The LORD commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the LORD our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. ²⁵And if we are careful to obey all this law before the LORD our God, as He has commanded us, that will be our righteousness.*

Deuteronomy brought Jewish history up to date, making it relevant to those teaching their children.

When our children bring us their expressions, questions or disagreements, we should listen, acknowledge their feelings and give a good, relevant answer. It is okay if they do not like our answer. We are still spending quality time, helping them in an appropriate and respectful way.

Sometimes this process can be uncomfortable because of subject matter and context. It is important to share with appropriateness what you know and acknowledge what you do not know, with a willingness to try and find it out.



I know a mom dealing with difficult and sensitive issues with her adolescent son. He was asking some hard, really embarrassing questions. He was having issues and challenges, so they were sitting with a counselor. His mom gave some honest, difficult answers to these embarrassing questions and it built trust in her son. Even the counselor was impressed that she was able to address these issues.

Act

Heartfelt and honest conversation and understanding is one thing. But when we act on these, it shows our children that their perspective and input are vital to us. Action shows respect, and respect shows that we value their growing competence.

ACT based on godly principles:

Romans 12:9-16: (NASB) ⁹Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.

We want our love to not be hypocritical. We want to abhor what is dark in their lives, and it is our parental responsibility to *cling to that which is good*. This is how we SHOW them our relationship. It is one thing to talk about a relationship, but it is another thing to LIVE a relationship.

ACT with deep devotion to your family. This means controlling our anger and reactions:

¹⁰Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; ¹¹not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the LORD...

It makes an impression when our children see us acting with deep Christian devotion to them and the whole family, even if they do not verbally acknowledge it.

ACT knowing that life is hard but can be handled when we keep our Christian perspective in order:

¹²rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, ¹³contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. ¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

We build a relationship by showing hope, perseverance, devotion, hospitality, blessing, rejoicing and sympathetic weeping.

ACT with firm and clear consistency. Our children respond when they know they can count on us to be a righteous support for them in their hardest times.

¹⁶Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

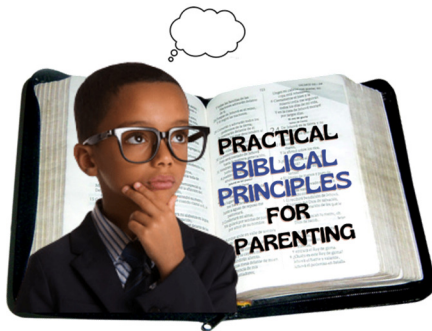
If they know what they can expect from us - Christian humility and wisdom to the best of our ability - it gives them confidence. Confidence builds a relationship, and the relationship will increase as they grow.



To **LISTEN** to our children, **ACKNOWLEDGE** what they say and feel, and then **ACT** on it is to be a mature parent:

Ephesians 4:14-15: (NASB) ¹⁴*As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;* ¹⁵*but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into him who is the head, even Christ.*

If a child feels important to their parent they will trust them, but if they do not feel important, they will not. We are *to grow up in all aspects into him who is the head, even Christ*. We need to grow up into mature parenting. Wherever we are along this road, we can start right now. Trust is such an important principle in order to develop that lifelong fruitful relationship.



Often it is our own growth that has the greatest influence on our children as they mature. Regardless of how much we think we have or have not grown as parents, we can **ALWAYS** begin to listen, acknowledge and act on what our children say and need. **Their challenges are important; let's make sure they know that we know that!**



What if we, as parents, have never done these things? Is it too late?

A suggestion if you are starting late: Sit down with your child and say, “I’ve been thinking about my parenting. I realize that I haven’t done some things as well as I should have. One of them is, I have not listened to you the way I should have. I want to change. So, here is what I’m going to do. I’m going to really work at this. I am going to need your help to really hear you. How can I help you, and how can you help me?”

Being honest and humble is a good start towards where we want to go. It is simple but not easy.

Building a solid and meaningful relationship with our children is work! Let’s be glad we have biblical principles to follow.

How do we maintain our positive parent-child relationships when life brings us unexpected trauma?

It can be just plain scary to think about the traumatic “WHAT IFs” that can come upon our children. As we discussed in Episode 1238: “Is Parental Discipline of Our Children a Thing of the Past?” let’s leave the “WHAT IFs” alone and focus on the “WHAT NOW?” Let’s rest in the fact that as Christians, we are assured that our experiences are able to be handled with God’s guidance and His strength. Having said that...



QUESTION #3

Bad things do happen
to good people!
How do we, as parents,
handle it when something
bad happens to our children?

Preparation and awareness

We live in times of enormous distress:

2 Timothy 3:1-4: (NASB) ¹*But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. ²For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, ⁴treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.*

This is the environment in which we live, and much of it is not good for our children. What are we supposed to do?

When uninvited bad things happen to our children, first and foremost, they need to be protected and cared for. Even if their trauma is a consequence of their own wrongdoing, remember the time to teach lessons will come later. Right now, it is time to cradle, nurture and reassure. Be present and strong for them.

These same principles apply when something happens to our children, as well as when our child has done something. If it is they who have done something wrong, again - we do not immediately jump on the lesson, but we have to assure them we are there for them to help them appropriately deal with the situation.



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WHY DOES GOD LET BAD THINGS HAPPEN?
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PROTECT:

As we shield our children in hard times, we need to also show them the way through those hard times:

Hebrews 12:12-15: (NASB) ¹²*Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, ¹³and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. ¹⁴Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled.*

The biblical principle here is to strengthen our kids when they are weak. Make a straight path for them to follow when something bad has happened. *Pursue peace with all men* - rise above the fray because it is so important to stay above the problem and not be caught in it, so that your child can have something stable to hold onto. We do not want them to fall into bitterness.



When my daughter was assaulted at age 15, it was traumatic, of course. I wanted to be able to sit and listen to her and hear what was on her heart, but she would not talk. This went on for weeks and weeks. It was fortunate that I ran my own business and was able to change my schedule. I would pick her up after high school and bring her home. She would just be quiet.

I would sit with her until my wife Trish got home. We would watch a soap opera, but she would not say a word. We would sit there quietly for weeks on end with her not saying a word. I was ready to listen, but she was not ready to talk. I just wanted her to know that I would not leave her. I was going to be there and when she decided to say a word, I would be there to hear it. It was one of the hardest things I've ever done, but one of the most blessed things. She finally started to speak up.



A family overcomes assault through faith

PRAY:

Managing the traumas in our children's lives means we pray for guidance with clarity and emotion:

Hebrews 4:15-16: (WEY) ¹⁵For we have not a high priest who is unable to feel for us in our weaknesses, but one who was tempted in every respect just as we are tempted, and yet did not sin. ¹⁶Therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our times of need.

Come boldly to the throne of grace - we go through Jesus to our heavenly Father to pour out our hearts, anger and frustrations. He can give us grace if we lift ourselves up to Him with that trust. We need to be prayerful when bad things happen to our children. Our prayers should be genuine, deep and with emotion.

POSITION:

We need to position ourselves for the long road ahead. Our children depend on it:

Isaiah 50:6-7: (NASB) ⁶I gave my back to those who strike me, and my cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover my face from humiliation and spitting. ⁷For the Lord GOD helps me, therefore, I am not disgraced; Therefore, I have set my face like flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed.

This is prophetically talking about Jesus subjecting himself to the torture of his death. *I have set my face like flint, and I know that I will not be ashamed* - everything his enemies did was to shame him, and yet he had stone-cold focus. Nothing mattered except doing the will of God. He had such focus amidst such trauma, pain and suffering, and we need to have that same focus when something happens to our children. "I am standing for my child and will not be moved." Sometimes we will have to say this over and over as we position ourselves for the long road ahead in dealing with whatever has happened.



PURSUE:

We need to pursue the help our children require to be able to understand, cope and overcome:

Luke 5:31: (NASB) *And Jesus answered and said to them, It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick.*

Do not hesitate to bring in trained professionals to help them work through the trauma.



We sought professional help after my daughter was assaulted. The counselor we had was a wonderful woman, but we weren't getting anywhere. It was nice but not effective. We made the decision to go to someone else who was not in our insurance network, so it cost us a lot more money, but it helped to save our daughter's life. When bad things happen we may need psychological, medical and family support. Do not be shy to reach out and get help.

PERSEVERE:

We need to persevere, to stay the course so when our children are suffering they have their best opportunity for renewal in their lives:

Psalms 34:15,18: (NASB) ¹⁵*The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and His ears are open to their cry.* ¹⁸*The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*

Starting might be easy but perseverance helps us to finish.

*The LORD is near to the brokenhearted - this is me!
and saves those who are crushed in spirit - this is me!*

I have faith I will find the guidance I need so that God can bring help to my broken heart and crushed spirit.

Psalms 32:8: (NASB) *I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you.*

Pray, "Show me how to recognize your guidance with Your eye upon me because my child is suffering, and I need to rise up and to be a present blessing."

Kids often go into a shell when bad things happen. Let them know you are with them.



Any trauma that comes upon our children brings a special brand of tragedy with it. In such circumstances it is we as parents - **to the best of our ability - who need to answer the call for strength and guidance.** If as parents we are too wounded and do not know what to do or how to do it, let us not hesitate to call on those of faith and fortitude around us and rely on them for the sake of our children.

We have seen this countless times. Someone is feeling buried, they reach out and they find someone who can walk with them. Then they walk together in faith and in fellowship, building one another up and they work at keeping that child safe and protected.

Even though the traumas in our children's lives are devastating, we have great hope in biblical "how to" coping lessons.



How do we handle it when our children walk away from us in anger and bitterness? Is there any hope?

As we have seen, managing through trauma is a big and life-altering experience. Facing a deep and harsh rebellion from our child is as well. This is another area of life that will draw upon our spiritual reserves, try our patience and even drain our fortitude. Preparation for and coping with rebelliousness has several unique aspects.

QUESTION #4

Contradiction, strife and even rebellion are potentially a part of a Christian's parenting experience. How do we handle this?

As with trauma, there is no specific recipe for rebellion. Some of us are naturally wired to test limits, and they end up in rebellion. Some are wired to seek adventure, and they end up in rebellion. Some have experiences that make them angry, anxious or vengeful and they act out and end up in rebellion. While it would be helpful to know what drives this child or that child into rebellion, we may not always have that advantage.

What do we do?

COMMUNICATE: SPEAK IN A WAY THEY CAN HEAR.

Sometimes they need us to reason with them:

Isaiah 1:18: (NASB) *Come now, and let us reason together, says the LORD, Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool.*

God was calling Israel to reason with Him. We should call our children to reason with us. Sometimes that requires sitting across from them, and that is what they need.

Sometimes they need direct confrontation:

1 Corinthians 4:14-16: (NASB) *¹⁴I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children. ¹⁵For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. ¹⁶Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me.*

In other words, the Apostle Paul is saying: *I know you might feel embarrassed, but that is not what I am trying to do. I am trying to build you up.* He did not hesitate to confront the congregation about the wrongs they were doing. As parents, there are times when it is absolutely appropriate - especially with a rebellious child - to confront them. It is not ALWAYS the time or the best approach, but if we use our wisdom to figure out when it is, then we should confront them the way the Apostle Paul did - for the purpose of building them up. If we confront them for the purpose of venting OUR anger - that is the wrong answer!



Sometimes they need a third-party example to show them where their difficulties are:

2 Samuel 12:1: (NASB) *Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him and said, There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor.*

After King David's great sin with Bathsheba, his advisor Nathan tells him a story about a poor man with one little lamb. A rich man who has many lambs takes that one little lamb. David gets very upset at the selfishness and insensitivity of the rich man. Nathan asks David what he thinks should happen to the rich man. David states he should pay fourfold and more! Then comes Nathan's famous proclamation, *You are that man!*

Sometimes a rebellious child can see the examples of another's behavior to see where they are going wrong. This tactic is a scriptural principle.

The idea of communicating is choosing a way they can best hear the communication. We need to use discretion on what is the best approach. Do they need reasoning? Do they need confrontation or a third-party example? To repeat, anger is NEVER the way to get to a child. Rebellious or not, anger causes the child to put up their defensive walls.

LISTEN: LISTEN IN A WAY THAT OPENS A PATHWAY OF POTENTIAL UNDERSTANDING. BE APPROACHABLE.

Hebrews 4:16: (WEY) *Therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our times of need.*

We are repeating this verse in order to now apply it to US as the parent. If we can go to our heavenly Father with all of our frustration, anger and anxiety, we should position ourselves for our frustrated, angry and anxious children to be able to come to us in the same way! We want them to be able to trust that when they pour out their issues that we will be listening. We do not need to agree, but we do need to be able to listen so we can guide them.



Our son had a lot of difficulty as a teenager. He needed to be understood. There were times when he would be deeply, profoundly frustrated and angry. We would sit down at the table and I would ask him to explain. He would explain and I would say, "So, is this what you are saying?" And he would say, "NO! That is NOT what I meant!" I would try again and repeat it. Sometimes it would go on for hours, but I knew this young man needed me to be with him. I would not leave that table until I could hear what was on his heart and repeat it back to him. This helped so much and was part of the protective process.

WORK: BE FOCUSED ON CONSTRUCTIVE DISCIPLINE.

Natural consequences are powerful teachers:

Luke 15:11-12: (NASB) ¹¹*And he said, A man had two sons. ¹²The younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me. So he divided his wealth between them.*

In this Parable of the Prodigal Son, the youngest son is demanding his share of the estate, and the father knows the son will mess up. The father allowed the natural consequences of his son's foolishness and immaturity to unfold.



Sometimes doing the work is letting your children suffer natural consequences of their experiences. Just be there for the fall. Anger is not constructive discipline.

WARN: GIVE CLEAR WARNINGS REGARDING CONTINUED TRAVELING ON A PATH OF DESTRUCTION.

Deuteronomy 30:17-18, 20: (NASB) *¹⁷But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You will not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it...²⁰by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.*

Our loving response to our children should be, “My child, if you turn away from righteous living, it will be destructive, but I am here for you always.”

This is what was said to the nation of Israel in these Deuteronomy scriptures. God was always waiting for Israel to repent and change course. We can take this basic principle and apply it to our children when they travel a divergent path.

WAIT: REBELLION USUALLY TAKES A LONG TIME TO PASS THROUGH SOMEONE'S LIFE - IF IT PASSES AT ALL. STAND FIRM IN PRINCIPLE AS YOU GO THROUGH THIS SEEMINGLY ENDLESS TIME.

Back to the Parable of the Prodigal Son, the younger son wasted the money and became destitute. And now he is coming back to the father to admit he was wrong.

It has been a long journey:

Luke 15:20-24: (NASB) *²⁰So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ²¹And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son. ²²But the father said...²³...let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found. And they began to celebrate.*

The son caused such havoc in the family, but the father was still waiting for him when he came home. *This son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found* - there would be consequences, but the first reaction was to simply embrace the son. With rebelliousness, we need to wait for the opportunities where we can embrace our child. They need to know they are loved.

RENEW: WE NEED TO CONSTANTLY RENEW OUR FAITH IN GOD'S PROVIDENCE AND POWER IN OUR LIVES.

Romans 8:26-28: (NASB) *²⁶In the same way the spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the spirit (itself) intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; ²⁷and he who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the spirit is, because (it) intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*



Galatians 6:1-2 reminds us that if anyone is caught in a trespass, we are to help restore them in a gentle way. But we need to be careful that we do not become entrapped in the sin we are trying to help them out of. If we have that concern, use someone trustworthy to help handle that situation. The same goes for helping our kids.



Our children need us. They need our stability, our maturity, our spirituality and our life experiences. We are vital to their growth, even if we have compromised some choices, made mistakes or even let them down. Whatever your circumstance, begin your best biblically-based parenting today! **Get focused, get help and get busy!**

There is no guidebook for parenting. The scriptures we used show principles for godliness. We have been taking these principles and applying them to parenting. Our heavenly Father wants the best for His spiritual sons, so let's learn from His example. Why wouldn't we give the best instruction possible to bless our children?

*So, how do we best support our kids through their toughest times?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

All quoted scriptures are from the 1995 version of NASB unless otherwise indicated.



Join us next week for our podcast on August 1, 2022
Ep. 1195: Is It a Sin If I...? (Part 1)



Check out our CQ Kids videos:
HOW CAN CHILDREN SERVE GOD?
christianquestions.com/youtube



Bonus Material and Study Questions

A few other scriptures regarding children that we did not have time for...

We want our children to know where to find the highest sources of the principles and integrity:

2 Timothy 3:15-17: (NASB) ¹⁵and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Eli warned his sons about sinning against God:

1 Samuel 2:22-25: (NASB) ²²Now Eli was very old; and he heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting. ²³He said to them, Why do you do such things, the evil things that I hear from all these people? ²⁴No, my sons; for the report is not good which I hear the LORD'S people circulating. ²⁵If one man sins against another, God will mediate for him; but if a man sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him? But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for the LORD desired to put them to death.

The path that Israel took after they had been protected and delivered by God. This text highlights the importance of keeping God always before us:

Judges 2:6-12: (NASB) ⁶When Joshua had dismissed the people, the sons of Israel went each to his inheritance to possess the land. ⁷The people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the LORD which He had done for Israel. ⁸Then Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of one hundred and ten. ⁹And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. ¹⁰All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel. ¹¹Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals, ¹²and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the LORD to anger.

Psalms 37:23-24: (NASB) ²³The steps of a man are established by the LORD, and he delights in His way. ²⁴When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, because the LORD is the One who holds his hand.

Our children will honor us, and through us, learn to honor God when we live the example of maturity and integrity we want for them:

Proverbs 4:1-6: (NASB) ¹Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father, and give attention that you may gain understanding, ²For I give you sound teaching; do not abandon my instruction. ³When I was a son to my father, tender and the only son in the sight of my mother, ⁴Then he taught me and said to me, Let your heart hold fast my words; Keep my commandments and live; ⁵Acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding! Do not forget nor turn away from the words of my mouth. ⁶Do not forsake her, and she will guard you; Love her, and she will watch over you.

There is something to be said about passing wisdom down from generation to generation. One of our most troubling problems today is that we think we are so enlightened that we simply toss the wisdom of generations past, labeling it as outdated and even damaging.



King David was assured of God's care for his son Solomon:

2 Samuel 7:12-15: (NASB) ¹²When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, ¹⁵but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you.

Jesus and the little children:

Mark 10:13-16: (NASB) ¹³And they were bringing children to him so that he might touch them; but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, Permit the children to come to me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all. ¹⁶And he took them in his arms and began blessing them, laying his hands on them.

Mark 9:35-37: (NASB) ³⁵Sitting down, he called the twelve and said to them, If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all. ³⁶Taking a child, he set him before them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷Whoever receives one child like this in my name receives me; and whoever receives me does not receive me, but Him who sent me.

Christian Questions Weekly Newsletter

CQ Rewind Show Notes and Study Questions

Text

CQREWIND

to **22828** to get started.



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Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1239: How Do We Best Support Our Kids Through Their Hardest Times?

<https://christianquestions.com/character/1239-raising-children/>

See:  CQ Rewind
SHOW NOTES

1. How do we TEACH our younger children to love God? (2 Peter 1:5-7)
Explain the following:
 - a. Apply all *diligence* (Psalms 101:2-3)
 - b. Supply *moral excellence* (Philippians 4:8)
 - c. Gain *knowledge* - teach God's word, laws and truth (Deuteronomy 6:7-9)
 - d. Practice *self-control* and delayed gratification (1 Corinthians 9:24-25)
 - e. Reinforce *perseverance* - hard effort brings satisfaction and results (1 Corinthians 9:26-27)
 - f. Exhibit *godliness* (1 Timothy 6:6-7)
 - g. Show the power of *brotherly kindness* (Romans 12:10)
 - h. Demonstrate the profound value of selfless *love* (1 Peter 4:8, Mark 10:13-16)
2. How do we keep open and honest relationships with our children as they become young adults and beyond? In order to move from "Parental Control" to "Mutual Competence," what must a parent do?
 - a. Listen: How do we hone our ability to listen to our children? (James 1:19-22)
 - b. Acknowledge: What are the three steps in acknowledging our children's questions and expressions? Explain whether we must or must not agree with their viewpoints and why? (Deuteronomy 6:20-25)
 - c. Act: What are the four basics for acting in Romans 12:9-16? What does this show our children?
 - d. If we have not been this kind of parent, what can we do at this point?
3. How do we react when something bad happens to our children? (2 Timothy 3:1-4) Explain these points:
 - a. Protect: What should we do in addition to protecting? (Hebrews 12:12-15)
 - b. Pray: What do we pray for in these situations? (Hebrews 4:15-16)
 - c. Position: What is needed to maintain your stand? (Isaiah 50:6-7)
 - d. Pursue: What might be needed if our child is deeply affected by their experiences? (Luke 5:31)
 - e. Persevere: How does this play a part in the healing of our children? (Psalms 32:8, 34:15,18)
4. How do we handle contradiction, strife and rebellion in our children?
 - a. Communicate: Speak in a way they can hear. Explain the progression of these steps:
 - i. Reason with them (Isaiah 1:18)
 - ii. Direct confrontation (1 Corinthians 4:14-16)
 - iii. Third-party examples (2 Samuel 12:1)
 - b. Listen: Listen in a way that opens a pathway of potential understanding. Be approachable. (Hebrews 4:16) How does the way we approach the Father relate to our children approaching us?
 - c. Work: Be focused on constructive discipline. (Luke 15:11-12) Describe natural consequences.
 - d. Warn: When our children turn from righteousness what should we say? (Deuteronomy 30:17-20)
 - e. Wait: Describe the father's reaction in the prodigal son to his son's rebellion. (Luke 15:20-24)
 - f. Renew: How does our faith in God's providence and power in our lives affect our children? (Romans 8:26-28) How do you share your faith with the children in your life?