

Growing Dads God's Way-17

The Most Powerful Tools in Godly Parenting: Tool One - Character

This message is one chapter of the book *The Joy of a Word Filled Family* available in audio and print form free online at www.dtbm.org as well as on Amazon.

We just returned from a week of ministry at Camp Barakel where I have been going ever since I was born, and where I have been returning to minister for the past 10 years or so. I was placed in a room with 138 seven through ten-year olds for several hours each day. After they were through with me Bonnie would drag me out and resuscitate me!

No actually it was one of the greatest times of ministry I have ever had especially because I felt so unable to communicate with them and so as the Lord promised when we are weak – they He can be strong through us. Thanks so much for praying.

On the 2500-mile drive I did learn many things about how exciting it is to be a parent. Many of them follow those anonymous “Laws of Parenting” published many years ago:

LAWS OF PARENTING

1. The later you stay up, the earlier your child will wake up the next morning.
2. For a child to become clean, something else must become dirty.
3. Toys multiply to fill any space available.
4. The longer it takes you to make a meal, the less your child will like it.
5. Yours is always the only child who doesn't behave.
6. If the shoe fits...it's expensive.
7. The surest way to get something done is to tell a child not to do it.

8. The gooier the food, the more likely it is to end up on the carpet.
9. Backing the car out of the driveway causes your child to have to go to the bathroom.
10. The more challenging the child, the more rewarding it is to be a parent...sometimes.

Now that was funny but this was not. I had the opportunity to get to know a cross section of young people from Michigan last week. Nearly 300 campers from over 90 different churches, over 20 different denominations but all at the same camp for that week. Probably the one verse that most summarizes what I saw is in Hosea 4:6:

my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you ...because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children.

Those young people are growing up in churches where they are being mostly entertained. The Camp directors told me they couldn't compete at all with what the churches are doing to attract and hold the kids. But the tragic result is Biblical illiteracy and spiritual starvation. They are excited and bright and spiritually unprepared for knowing what they believe, what God has revealed in His Word, and how to appropriate that truth into their lives.

Has the God of the Universe marked the pathway we need to stay on for raising our children? The good news is that He has. And in the map book called God's Word is a clearly marked trail for Parenting and Grand parenting our Families in Godliness. May I just trace that map through the Bible with you today? You may want to mark some of these verses, or note them on paper so you can use them to see where you are or should be on the Road to Godly Parenting your Families and Homes!

MILE MARKERS ON THE ROAD OF GODLINESS IN PARENTING

Last time we learned what some of our goals should be for us as we disciple our children. We want to cultivate in them by God's grace:

G A GODLY LIFE
O AN OUTREACHING LIFE
D A DISCIPLINED LIFE
L A LOVING LIFE
I AN INTEGRITY LIFE
N A NOBLE LIFE
E AN EXEMPLARY LIFE
S A SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE
S A SACRIFICIAL LIFE

Today we look the other direction, what do we need to be as parents. Or what kind of character does God want in us to be His

communicators of truth to our precious children? May I share these areas God looks at:

IN P A PATIENT LIFE
A AN AFFECTIONATE LIFE
R A RESPECTFUL LIFE
E AN EASILY-ENTREATED LIFE
N A NURTURING LIFE

T A THANKFUL LIFE
I AN INIQUITY-HATING LIFE
N A NOT BEHAVING RUDELLY LIFE
G A GENTLENESS LIFE

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GODLY LIVING

- o I WILL LEARN TO LIVE FOR GOD EACH DAY. Titus 2:11-13
- o I WILL NOT CHOOSE TO LOOK AT WHAT GOD CALLS EVIL. Psalm 101:3-4
- o I WILL NOT USE MY MOUTH TO SAY WHAT GOD CALLS CORRUPT. Ephesians 4:29
- o I WILL SEEK TO PLEASE GOD IN ALL I DO. 1 Corinthians 10:31

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OUTREACHING Matthew 28:18-20

- o I WILL SAY TO THE LORD ALL THROUGH MY LIFE – HERE AM I LORD SEND ME. Isaiah 6:8

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DISCIPLINED: is defined by the Greek Dictionary as “a virtue, which consists in mastery of the appetites and passions, especially the sensual ones.” The only force that can control our flesh is the Holy Spirit. When yielded to Him we become vessels that are worshipful sacrifices to Him no longer to self. I want to be graciously under the control of God’s Spirit of Discipline.

- o I WILL LEARN TO BE DISCIPLINED IN MY EVERY DAY LIVING. 1 Timothy 4:7
- o I WILL BE ORDERLY: 1 Corinthians 14:40
- o I WILL BE LOVELY: Philippians 4:8
- o I WILL BE HARD WORKING: 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12
- o I WILL BE DEPENDABLE: Psalm 15:4b

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LOVING: Colossians 3:14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. **LOVE** is the absence of selfishness. I want to be less selfish and self-seeking than I was last month.

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INTEGRITY: 1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light

- o I WILL OBEY GOD EVEN WHEN IT LOOKS HOPELESS. Genesis 16:9,13
- o I WILL OBEY THE LORD WHEN ALONE, FAR FROM HOME, AND EVEN WHEN NO ONE CAN EVER FIND OUT WHAT I DID – EXCEPT GOD. Genesis 39:9

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NOBLE: Philippians 4:8 I WILL SEEK WHAT IS - noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue

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and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.
EXEMPLARY LIVING: 1 Timothy 4:12 Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word (**what I say**), in conduct (**what I do**), in love (**what I give**), in spirit (**what I feel**), in faith (**what I believe**), in purity (**what I resist**).

- I WILL DEVOUR GOD'S WORD. 1 Timothy 4:13
- I WILL SERVE CHRIST'S CHURCH. 1 Timothy 4:
- I WILL EXCEL IN SPIRITUAL THINGS NOT MERELY IN TEMPORAL THINGS LIKE SPORTS, THE ARTS OR ACADEMICS. 1 Timothy 4:15
- I WILL RUN FROM SIN IN ANY FORM. 2 Timothy 2:22

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SPIRIT-FILLED: Ephesians 5:18, 21 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; **but be filled with the Spirit, 21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.** Spirit-Filled living makes us submissive in every area of our lives:

- I WILL OBEY MY PARENTS EVERY DAY I LIVE IN THEIR HOME, AND HONOR THEM ALL OF MY DAYS ON EARTH. Ephesians 6:1-3
- I WILL HONOR MY BOSS AT WORK. Ephesians 6:5
- I WILL KEEP THE LAWS OF MY COUNTRY AS A TESTIMONY TO MY LORD. Romans 13:1-2
- I WILL HONOR MY LEADERS AT CHURCH ALL MY DAYS SO THAT I MAY SOMEDAY HAVE THE HIGH HONOR OF SERVING Christ's CHURCH. Hebrews 13:17

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SACRIFICIAL: Romans 12:1-2

- **I WILL SACRIFICE SELF FOR CHRIST'S SAKE -**
Instead of loving myself most I am willing to love Christ best and others more than myself. The moment I deliberately do something definite either for God or others that costs me something, I am expressing love. Love is "selflessness" or "self-sacrifice" in contradistinction to "selfishness." Most of us know little of living like this or being "led" in this right way. But once a person discovers the delight of doing something for others, he has started through the gate being led into one of God's green pastures.

IN P

PATIENT: I WILL GO TO THE END OF THE LINE - Luke 14: 7-11 So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: 8 "When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; 9 and he who invited you and him come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. 10 But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. 11 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

- o Instead of being "boss" I am willing to be at the bottom of the heap. Or to use sheep terminology, instead of being "Top Ram" I'm willing to be a "tail-ender". When the desire for self-assertion, self-aggrandizement, self-pleasing gives way to the desire for simply pleasing God and others, much of the fret and strain is drained away from daily living. A hallmark of the serene soul is the absence of "drive," at least, "drive" for self-determination.
- o The person who is prepared to put his personal life and personal affairs in the Master's hands for His management and direction has found the place of rest in fresh energy to please others.
- o **I WILL BE PATIENT so that I do not make the mistakes that I see in those who make hasty and unwise decisions like King Saul who couldn't wait long enough to obey God. Or Lot who wanted to make a fast buck and ended up losing his wife, his children, his honor, and all his possessions because of impatient and unwise decision making!**

A

ATTITUDE: I WILL PRAISE INSTEAD OF POUT- 1 Thessalonians 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

- o Instead of finding fault with life and always asking "Why?" I am willing to accept every circumstance of life in an attitude of gratitude. Human beings, being what they are, somehow feel entitled to question the reasons for everything that happens to them.

- o In many instances life itself becomes a continuous criticism and dissection of one's circumstances and acquaintances. We look for someone or something on which to pin the blame for our misfortunes. We are often quick to forget our blessings, slow to forget our misfortunes.
- o But if one really believes his affairs are in God's hands, every event, no matter whether joyous or tragic, will be taken as part of God's plan. To know beyond doubt that He does all for our welfare is to be led into a wide area of peace and quietness and strength for every situation.

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RESPECTFULNESS: Leviticus 19:32 'You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the Lord. **We are closing in on the era God says will be lawless and hard hearted. When children will be disrespectful, and society will be brutal. What a strategic time to capture the hearts of our children to reflect the submissive reverent heart God desires in us His children.**

2 Timothy 3:1-3 But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. 2 People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 **without love**, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, NIV

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EMMANCIPATION FROM SELF: **I WILL SEEK JESUS-OTHERS-YOU = JOY** - Philippians 2:4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

- o Instead of insisting on my rights I am willing to forego them in favor of others. Basically this is what the Master meant by denying one's self. It is not easy, nor normal, nor natural to do this. Even in the loving atmosphere of the home, self-assertion is pretty evident and the powerful exercise of individual rights is always apparent.
- o But the person who is willing to pocket his pride, to take a back seat, to play second fiddle without a feeling of being abused or put upon has gone a long way onto new ground with God.
- o There is a tremendous emancipation from "self" in this attitude. One is set free from the shackles of personal pride. It's pretty hard to hurt such a person. He who has no sense of self-importance cannot be offended or deflated. Somehow such people enjoy a wholesome

outlook of carefree abandon that makes their Christian lives contagious with contentment and gaiety.

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NURTURING LIFESTYLE: 2 Peter 3: 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

- o Job 23:12 I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary [food.] (NKJV)
- o Psalm 119:97, 165 Oh, how I love Your law! It [is] my meditation all the day. 165 Great peace have those who love Your law, And nothing causes them to stumble. (NKJV)
- o Jeremiah 15:16 Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts. (NKJV)
- o Tapes, CDs. Personal daily Bible Study

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THANKFULNESS: Romans 1:21 For although they knew God, they **neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him**, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. NIV

1 Thessalonians 5:18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. NIV

I INIQUITY-HATING: Isaiah 33: 15-17 He who walks righteously and speaks what is right, who rejects gain from extortion and keeps his hand from accepting bribes, who stops his ears against plots of murder and shuts his eyes against contemplating evil— 16 this is the man who will dwell on the heights, whose refuge will be the mountain fortress. His bread will be supplied, and water will not fail him. 17 Your eyes will see the king in his beauty and view a land that stretches afar. NIV

- o Psalm 101:3 I will set before my eyes no vile thing. The deeds of faithless men I hate; they will not cling to me.
- o Psalm 106: 34-37 They did not destroy the peoples as the LORD had commanded them, 35 but they mingled with the nations and adopted their customs. 36 They worshiped their idols, which became a snare to them. 37 They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons.

N NOT I BUT CHRIST: **I WILL LIVE THE CRUCIFIED LIFE** - Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

- o Instead of exercising and asserting my will, I learn to cooperate with His wishes and comply with His will. It must be noted that all the steps outlined here involve the will.
- o The saints from earliest times have repeatedly pointed out that nine-tenths of Christianity, of becoming a true follower, a dedicated disciple, lies in the will.
- o When a man or woman allows his will to be crossed out, canceling the great I in their decisions, then indeed the Cross has been applied to that life. This is the meaning of taking up one's cross daily -to go to one's own death -no longer my will in the matter but His will be done.

G GENTLENESS: is a beautiful reflection of God in our lives by the absence of an abrasive manner in my dealings with people. I want an increasing tendency toward personal kindness in my way with others.

- o Matthew 11:28-30 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for **I am gentle and lowly in heart**, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

- o Galatians 5:22-25 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, **kindness (gentleness KJV)**, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.
- o 2 Timothy 2:24 And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be **gentle to all**, able to teach, patient,

By now we are all asking the same thing aren't we?

- o How could we ever do anything of this magnitude?
- o How can we penetrate the lives of our children with these truths?
- o How can we see God unleashed in their lives?
- o How can we every day be actively using God's Word and seeing it touch those children and grandchildren we love so much?

The answer is in the most powerful tool in the arsenal of weaponry to win spiritual battles that God has given us. And parenting, and grand parenting is a spiritual battle, right? Well, tonight we will conclude our look at Parenting in Godliness with the key to raising, nurturing, and launching children that please the Lord as we learn How to Pray for our children.

When Jesus left Earth and went back to heaven, what did those who were closest to Him remember about Him? Remember, imitation is the highest form of compliment.

- o What did they imitate from His life?
- o What was it about Him they couldn't get along without? Prayer, of course.
- o What do we need to do the most for our family? Pray, of course.

We as parents have a biblical obligation to PRAY FOR OUR CHILDREN. Note 1 Samuel 12:23 and Ephesians 6:18:

1 Samuel 12:23 "Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way. (NKJV)

Ephesians 6:18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints -- (NKJV) And what are we watching for? God answering those prayers!