

GOSPEL-CENTERED PARENTING IN A POST-CHRISTIAN WORLD

How Then Shall We Live?



Seoul International Airport Immigration



Picture you, your wife, and 4 yr old son

A Prayer about Gospel Parenting

Oh, the arrogant pride of thinking that by my "good parenting" I can take credit for what you alone have graciously done in the lives of my children.

Oh, the arrogant unbelief of assuming that by my "bad parenting" I've forever limited what you will be able to accomplish in the future.

Oh, the undue pressure our children must feel when we parent more out of fear and pride than by your love and grace.

Everyday Prayers—365 Days to a Gospel-Centered Faith
Scotty Smith



There is hope ... but not a magical formula.

- 1 Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.
- 2 It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.
- 3 Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward.
- 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth.
- 5 Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

Be intentional; be consistent.

Psalm 127:1-5 ESV

Parenting is a matter of identity

Who am I?

- Identity is a product of nature and nurture.
- You are **created** in the image of God for the purpose of glorifying and enjoying him.
- You are **fallen** and affected by the brokenness of sin (past scars, good/bad models).
- You are **redeemed** by the work of Christ.
 - He was punished for your iniquity.
 - You are covered in his righteousness.
- You are an **adopted** child of God called to participate in his work of redemption.

Parenting is a matter of identity

Who am I?

Parents should consider how they resemble their own parents in attitudes and actions.

Parents can fall into a variety of "extremes":

- best friend
- taskmaster/judge
- permissive uncle
- helicopter

Parenting is a matter of identity

Who is my child?

- **Created** in the image of God for the purpose of glorifying and enjoying him.
- A **gift** from God for which I am a steward.
- **Fallen** and affected by the brokenness of sin (good/bad parenting).
- Children of believers are members of the Covenant of Grace.
 - They have a covenantal relationship with God.
 - They enjoy the benefits of the covenant community.

What does this mean in your context?

What are we hoping to see?

We pursue what we value, children who are ...

Or...

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| • Moral | • Broken, soft-hearted |
| • Successful | • Repentant |
| • Well educated | • Biblically trained |
| • Well rounded | • Single minded |
| | • Christ-centered |
| | • Globally-minded |

What is Gospel-Parenting?

- Gospel parenting involves
 - What you say (message)
 - What you do (method)
 - Why you do it (motive)
- The Gospel of what God has done for you in Christ gives you:
 - Goal – participate in the redemptive work of God
 - Motive – the glory of God and growth of his kingdom
 - Enablement – the work of God's Spirit

The easy but evil alternative

Moralism

- The principle that blessing/success is based on what you do.
- Progress is dependent on trying harder or knowing more.
- This alternative is man-centered rather than Christ-centered.
- Goal is to be a better person rather than growing in the knowledge and love of Christ.

How to spot moralism

- “God loves you less because of what you do/did.”
- “God will bless you if you do this.”
- “You need to learn more and work harder.” (Bootstraps theology)
- If what you say/teach would be wholly acceptable in a speech at a social club or public school.

Coping with failure and disappointment

- The Gospel gives parents hope in the midst of failure (and all parents will fail):
 - God still loves us.
 - God still uses us.
 - God's work is not thwarted.
- We are free to repent and move on (which does not include “making up” for mistakes).
- We respond to grace with thanksgiving and renewed obedience.
- God loves the child more than the parent ever could.

What do you leave them with?

A believer's identity is grounded in Christ.

Parents (and their children) must understand God can not love them any more or any less than he does right now because of the merit of Jesus.

[Jesus said:] As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.

John 15:9 ESV

Parents strive to be ...

- intentional
- consistent

A Prayer about Gospel Parenting

Heavenly Father,

Since our children are your inheritance, teach me how to care for them as a humble steward of your grace, not as an anxious owner. More than anything else, show me how to parent in a way that best reveals the unsearchable riches of Jesus in the gospel.

Give me quick repentances and observable kindnesses. Convict me quickly and surely when I do not relate to your covenant children "in line with the truth of the gospel."

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