

GOSPEL-CENTERED PARENTING IN A POST-CHRISTIAN WORLD

The World We Live In



The Estock Family



Brandon
Age 21
& fiancé Ana
Live in St. Louis

Nathan
Age 19

Morgan
Age 15

Susan
Married 26 yrs.

Why are you here?

- "I have no idea what to do as a parent. I need guidance so that I don't ruin my children."
- "I'm struggling, and I need help. Please tell me what I can do to make it all work out right. Life is just too messy."
- "I know I've messed up. I want to fix things. Show me how."
- "I'm doing it right—just look at my kids. I'm here to help others."

The Gospel challenges our actions and motives.

Memories of Life in 1995



Dial-up Internet modems



55 MPH was the maximum legal limit on all US highways



Debut of the DVD (Digital Versatile Disk)



George Foreman Grill



Pagers were the dominant form of instant communication

What are your parenting memories?

Things good/bad you remember from your parents.

Things good/bad you have done yourself.

A Different World

Source: Pew Research Center "How America Changed During Barack Obama's Presidency"

- Millennials have surpassed Baby Boomers as the largest living generation.
- The US is more diverse: 1) in 2013, the majority of babies were racial or ethnic minorities; 2) in 2013, 12% of newlyweds were mixed-race couples.
- Those who identify as "atheist," "agnostic," or "nothing in particular" increased from 16% to 23% of the population. Professing Christians dropped from 78% to 71%.
- The iPhone debuted in 2007 and now 68% own a smartphone. In 2010, only 3% owned a tablet; the number is now 45%.
- 8 states and DC have legalized marijuana for recreational purposes. A majority of Americans now support legalization of the drug.
- In 2015, the Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage, and a majority of Americans agree.

Our challenges

- Parenting can be intimidating and challenging.
 - We struggle with envy.
 - We struggle with discontent.
- Mankind's tendency is to pick a place in time and stay there.
 - We prefer a period of parenting (infancy, toddler, etc.)
 - "Things were great in the 'good ole' days'."
- Every generation has "pet sins" they tend to overlook.
 - Older generations ignore issues of justice and stewardship as they pursue material wealth.
 - Younger generations ignore sexual sin as they pursue individual freedom and expression.

Our challenges

- The generation gaps
 - The children of today will soon see the youth of today as out of touch.
 - Prolonged adolescence is coupled with age compression & age aspiration.
- Communication is changing rapidly.
 - Social media is a paradigm shift in communication. The platforms are transient.
 - Disagreement = rejection and disrespect.
- Terms are unknown.
 - Biblical and doctrinal literacy is declining, and the appetite is waning.
 - Grace = "God lets me do what I want."
 - Rules of any kind are oppressive legalism.

Acts 2:39 ESV

For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

- Peter's sermon at Pentecost after the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- The promise = the promise of salvation and the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- God worked to fulfill his ancient promise, using even the evil deeds of the Jewish and Gentile leaders.
- God is not deterred by man's sin, as he saves those he has chosen for himself. His work continues today.

Our task

- God's promise is transcendent, but the context in which the promise operates is always changing.
- We make the promise known through all generations.
- We study to understand the needs of the culture and the language that most effectively communicates.
 - Study the messages teens receive (the Internet, media, music, videos, etc.).
 - Note the themes underlying popular culture.
- We strive to bring the unchangeable truth of Scripture to bear on the circumstances of today (Ezekiel 37: "Can these bones live?").

Walt Mueller: "We take care to stay nurtured in God's Word AND study the shifting sands of culture."

Our hope

Walt Mueller: "The battle in every culture is the same. It is a battle against the sin nature."

- The sin nature in you, and the sin nature in your child.
- The weapons remain the same: the Word, prayer, relationships
- We are not alone in the task. "I am with you" is the antidote for our fear.
- Covenant children have a God-given status, and the Lord will always receive one of his covenant people.
- The power and goodness of God is eternally confirmed in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Resources to help

- Center for Parent and Youth Understanding (cpyu.org)
- *Almost Christian* by Kenda Creasy Dean
- *Soul Searching* by Christian Smith
- *Souls in Transition* by Christian Smith
- postchristiancondition.org (a new website/blog on apologetics in today's culture by a PCA Teaching Elder)