

Series: Parenting 911

Title: Top Ten Parenting Tips

Texts: Selected Passages

Key Word: Tips

Proposition: Everyone can become both a better parent and a Christ-follower by practicing these tips.

Many consider parenting as one of life's greatest challenge because relationships require hard work. Parenting never ends. Passing on family values and faith will have eternal consequences. I trust that some tips will help us impact our kids with love.

I invite you to use your sermon notes to write down what you wish to remember. Let's begin with 10 parenting tips for your consideration.

The tenth of the top ten parenting tips is you're always on. Parents teach what matters the most. What matters the most? Love, because love is forever. The Bible says, ***“Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”*** (Deuteronomy 6:5) The Bible typically links love for God with obedience to Him. The Bible continues, ***“These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children.”*** (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7) We love God by thinking about his promises and commandments; by teaching them to our children, and by living each day by His ways. God never intends the Church or a Christian school to be the primary teacher of His ways. Parents can not escape from their primary responsibility.

When Melinda and I became parents, I wondered to myself, “How are we going to parent these two girls? How were we going to teach them right from wrong, about God's love in Jesus Christ, how to pray, and how to serve?” I remembered God's promise. God said, “Chris, I am able. I will see you through.” Paul, a Christ-follower said, *“And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you*

need, you will abound in every good work." (2 Cor. 9:8) When parenting is challenging and difficult say, "He is able!" God isn't afraid of raising children in the 21st century. He knows the problems, the risks, and the pitfalls in today's culture. And He is able to provide "all things...at all times...all that you need" when it comes to raising your kids to love the Lord.

Number nine: Busyness and intimacy are enemies. The Psalmist wrote, "*Be still, and know that I am God.*" (Psalm 46:10), It's time to be still. Parents must create a place for conversation. Building relationships require a slowing down in a quiet place which builds a common-unity.

The family dinner hour was that space. Sometime around 4:30 PM, Mom, Dad, my two sisters and I sat down at the table and enjoyed our meal. Without the distractions of McHale's Navy, Gilligan's Island, the evening news, and phone calls, we spent an hour getting to know and love each other. Today, Melinda and I try our best to keep the enemy of busyness at bay.

Number eight, the more content you are; the more content they are.

Contentment is contagious. The writer of Proverbs noted this truth, "*A cheerful heart brings a smile to your face; a sad heart makes it hard to get through the day.*" (Proverbs 15:13)

Friends, I urge you to regularly connect with God to keep your soul filled with His joy, hope, and love, because your kids will catch it. Your kids will catch your courage, contentment and hope in Christ. So do whatever it takes... attend regular worship and a small group; serve on a ministry team; commit to daily bible study, sing and/or listen to

Christian music, go on a retreat – do whatever you need to stay strong in your faith. Your children will catch your contentment, joy, hope, faith in the Lord. You are contagious.

Number seven; stay on our kids like a wet shirt. Sometimes parents say, "I feel like I am on my kids all the time." I say, "Good for you. You can loosen up later, like in their mid-thirties." The Bible says, "*Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.*" (Proverbs 22:6) I keep telling myself that this training takes time. Kids deserve our constant wisdom, abiding faith and steadfast discipline. Everyday is training day.

I sympathize with single parents who face this daunting task alone. I admire their courageous faithfulness. I applaud all present single parents. You're here today even though you are exhausted from work and from caring for your children. You're here so that you can become God's women or be God's man. Let's give them some love.

A few single parents may not have the support of their ex-spouse allowing the kids to do whatever they want. They may not share the same faith. So, all their standards, boundaries, and teaching are trashed. Such conflicting values stir up resistance in the custodial home. So what can single parents do? They can: **Keep doing the right thing. Bring your kids to church where others can reinforce your values. Refuse to bad mouth your ex to your kids. Don't compromise your standards.** Yes, it's tough. But remember God is able in all things.

Sixth, take your fun with you. Many times circumstances around us determine how we feel and respond. However instead of our circumstances shaping our attitude, our

attitude can shape our circumstances. One day a woman got a new boat. She and her grandkids took this new boat out on the lake. The woman assumed that it was full of gas. Once they were out in the lake, they ran out of gas. So they had to decide what they were going to do. They could have screamed and yelled, or just sit there and cry. Their choice would set the tone. They chose to start building a positive memory. Grandma and grandchildren left the boat and swam to shore singing, “What would you do for a Klondike bar...” Take the fun with you.

The Bible says, “*For the joy of the LORD is your strength.*” (Nehemiah 8:10) How do you have the strength to turn a negative into a positive? By claiming your joy, through knowing that God’s love will never abandon you. So take fun with you wherever you go.

Number five; we need to teach our kids that money isn’t everything. There are things that you just wouldn’t do for money because money isn’t everything. Character matters, principles matter, your future matters, your life matters, you wouldn’t do anything for money because money isn’t everything. It’s not for you and it’s not for the kids and you’ve got to teach your kids that principle.

The Bible says, “*The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*” (1 Timothy 6:10) Some are so hungry for money that they have literally wrecked their lives and abandoned God.

Kids need to see that you believe that money isn't everything. Seeing your conviction will successfully carry them through their lives. When they understand that life is not about money and that it about loving God and loving others then they will find joy. They will learn that God's blessing comes from seeking His kingdom first.

Number four; let go slow. Some parents can't wait to be empty-nesters. But after 20-25 years go by the parting is bitter-sweet. Slowly letting go enables this transition to be a celebration.

All parents cringe over the huge financial, emotional, and relational investment it takes to raise children, knowing that it is a temporary appointment. A parent's role is to prepare a child for adulthood. The Bible says, "*For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.*" (Genesis 2:24) The same God who spent eternity relating with God the Son is the Father who saw His Son leave His heavenly home and go "out on His own" to accomplish His mission in life. And He's the same God who intended that our kids do likewise.

Melinda and I have yet to experience the conflicting emotions of our daughters taking flight and leaving the nest. We have felt though, the conflict between doubt and faith; fear and confidence in slowly letting go. We remember the first day of kindergarten; their first time cooking over the stove; their first time at a friend's house; and their first overnighter with a friend.

Even though there is no definitive Scripture passage that speaks of this life transition, we can hold onto these words from A.W. Tozer, "Everything in life which we

commit to God is really safe. And everything which we refuse to commit to Him is never safe.” We are only stewards of that child for a time, until the child is ready to enter into an adult relationship with God and with His world. So let go slow.

Number three; Parents get your kids in the right boat. This critical tip is the difference between peace and worry. Parents form their children’s values, fashion their faith, familiarize them with Christ, and feed their significance. In the midst of this formation is this raging chaos called adolescences. This turbulent season challenges both parent and child. At this stage of life developmental psychologists tell us that children begin to try out what it means to be an adult, making decisions to see if these are decisions that adults can make.

Peers become more important than family. Coaches, teachers and others have a greater influence on their lives. Even though parents can’t control many of their teen’s relationships, they can put them on the right boat when they cross the waters with their friends. They can place **their children in places where healthy, Christ-filled relationships exist.** So place your younger children in All-stars and Kidzstuff, where positive friendships can develop. Urge your teens to attend Sunday school, Fuse or Orbit where your values will be reinforced.

What should you do if your teen complains about church or youth activities?

Friends, Let me ask you this: “What do you do when your teen comes home from school and says, Mr. or Mrs. Smith is so boring and mean. So I’m going to quit school.” Do you say, “Well sweetheart since you’re much older now I guess you can choose to quit school.

You don't do that. "You say, "I had over 30 teachers that I didn't like." GO TO SCHOOL!!!" Friends, God gives parents His authority. So, *be the parent*. Get them on the right boat.

Number two; you are not the only parent with rules. Kids typically have many false perceptions. They will say, "no one has rules but you...all the other kids can do whatever they want. You're ruining my life with all these rules." So what can you do?

First, call another parent. Say, "I called to see if you guys have any rules for your kids... Our children seem to be confused. They seem to think that you have no rules at your house." The other parent will probably say, "Yeah! Do you have rules?" Then you say, "Yes, we do too." Then they will say, "Really, our kids were just telling us that you have no rules at your house." Parents, work together to clear-up this misunderstanding. Everybody has rules. Governments, schools, coaches, band directors, employers, have rules. God has commandments. Monopoly has rules. Everybody has rules.

So what can we do in response to rules? Obey. The Bible says, "***Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.***" (Colossians 3:20) Obedience always pleases the Lord. This verse also implies that parents have standards, boundaries, and guidelines for their kids to obey. It means that parents should have rules so the kids can be safe, and enjoy loving, selfless relationships. Basically, love with boundaries pleases God.

Number one; good seed planted in good soil, yields good results. Kids must learn that every action has results. If we plant to please our own desires or pleasures, we'll reap a crop of sorrow and evil. If we plant to please God, we'll reap joy and everlasting life.

According to the Bible, good seed resembles seeds of selfless giving for the sake of others. *“Do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”* (Hebrews 13:16) God is pleased when you generously share with others. Generous giving not only pleases God; it also makes the heart grow bigger and warmer.

Jesus said, *“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”* (Luke 6:38) If we treat others generously, graciously, and compassionately, these qualities will come back to us in full measure. It is a blessing to be a blessing to others. We’ve got to teach our kids so they will know that when they plant good seed in good soil God will give good results. (2177)

Let’s Pray