

Entrusting Our Children to the Lord

Week 1: Difficult Situations

The Problem

Every child (and parent!) has a unique set of desires, fears, temptations, strengths, and weaknesses.

Formulas Don't Work

The subtle (or not so subtle) message in Christian communities is:

Love + Discipline + Godly Instruction = Good Kids

But this is a lie.

Correct interpretation of Proverbs 22:6.

We are Sinners Parenting Sinners

Desires of the heart (James 4:1-10)

What agenda is dictating my parenting?

What is God calling me to in parenting?

- Is my parenting loving?
- Is it consistent?
- Is it wise?

By his grace and with His help, this is our responsibility. The results must be left to the work of the Holy Spirit in our children's lives (John 14:15-30).

Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. John 14:23

Parenting Day by Day with Love and Hope

Lamentations 3:22-23 is for parents **and** children.

- Moving from guilt and shame to hope
- Moving from strict and unyielding to encouraging and nurturing
- We both need daily forgiveness, mercy, and hope

How do we stop provoking them? Eph. 6:4

When our primary focus is on **our own** heart (motives, fears, expectations, desires, agendas), a lot of difficult situations get smoothed out.

Resources

Books:

Wayward Children: Finding Peace, Keeping Hope (31-Day Devotionals for Life) by Stuart Wesley Scott (Excellent daily devotional for keeping our hearts focused on Christ as parents.)

Child Proof: Parenting by Faith, Not Formula by Julie Lowe (Julie Lowe is a biblical counselor with CCEF and has had her own experience parenting in very difficult situations.)

Entrusting Our Children to the Lord

Week 2: Our Child's Salvation

When it comes to parenting, there are no formulas or systems that will guarantee our child's salvation.

- Rebels and Christ-followers can come from the **same** set of parents.
- If our children **are** saved, it's not because **we** saved them. It's God's grace.
- We as parents are simply called to faithfulness in the Lord.
- Children are moral responders. They are responsible for their choices.

When our children disappoint us, we can fall into two unhelpful extremes:

- The shame game
- The blame game

Parenting is *not* like tending a garden (put the right things into it and you're guaranteed good results).

Our immediate response will be to try to fix things, but this is dipping back into a philosophy of works-righteousness.

- Have the attitude of 2 Chronicles 20:12.
- Live out the gospel in your relationship with your child.
- Focus on building a real relationship with them.
- We are not looking for outward conformity to a religious system.

Focus on cultivating a humble and dependent heart, trusting the Lord's ways.

- Have the attitude of **Psalm 38**. Let this trial draw you more deeply into prayerful dependence on God.
- Ask God to show you if there is any sin that you need to repent of and confess to God and to your child.
- Moving forward, focus on **your** heart and **your** responses instead of your child's behavior. Mt. 7:3-5
- Loving those who are causing us **pain** causes us to look at the love of Christ in a new way. Luke 6
- Are we loving them as they **are** or as we would like them to be?

Resources

Books:

Come Back, Barbara: A Father's Pursuit of a Prodigal Daughter by C. John Miller and Barbara Miller Juliani

"A daughter's rejection of her father's faith taught him how to love her on God's terms. Their honest story of grief and reconciliation will bless all those who love prodigals"--

Audio:

Hope & Help for Hurting Parents (4-part original sermon series) By Brad Bigney

Many Christian parents are struggling with guilt and fear that comes with a rebellious older child, yet the church is often silent and unprepared to offer hope, or worse yet pulls away and condemns, leaving the parents wondering what they should do, how they should think, and where they can find hope. God's Word offers hope for the hurting parents of wayward children. Bigney shares from his own personal experience how he and his wife found hope to persevere in the midst of great personal sorrow. <https://bradbigney.com/hope-help-for-hurting-parents-4-part-original-sermon-series/>