**Parenting Redeemed by the Gospel**

*Grace Fellowship Church, Pastor Brad Bigney*

1. **Parenting is a Long Obedience in the Same Direction**

**Hebrews 12:1–2** “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith...”

Parenting’s not a sprint. Anybody can do a 100 yard dash in parenting. The goal of parenting is to persevere for the long-haul. And that’s when the truth of Easter and the resurrection of Jesus Christ absolutely have to intersect with your heart and home – in specific moments of parenting.

And that’s why God in His wisdom gives us one of the longest chapters in the Bible in **I Corinthians 15** when He’s talking about the Gospel and the implications of the resurrection. If the resurrection of Jesus Christ is real to you, then even when you don’t have all the parenting answers you still have the power and presence of Christ in your response in that moment.

**1 Corinthians 15:55–58** “‘O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?’ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

1. **Parenting is for Powerless People**

The Bible assumes that this parenting process works best with powerless people. The people who know they can’t do it and don’t have all the answers. But here’s the problem: we don't like being weak.

 “In parenting, your weakness will not keep you from effectiveness if you believe the Gospel. Your delusion of strength will! Because it will keep you from seeking the Lord… keep you from seeking His help… keep you from humbly saying, 'It's not only my child God is working on in this moment… He's also working on me… and I must take time to humbly confess my own sin… and to seek the resources of His grace before I move forward…'"

*Taken from Case for Kids tapes series, tape #3 "What Are Teenagers?"*

**2 Corinthians 12:9–10** “And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

* What’s the biblical goal for parenting?

To faithfully shepherd your children in such a way that they are introduced to the Gospel and their Savior – not only by your clear verbal communications of the Gospel… but also by the way Gospel truth is put on display in your conduct and everyday interactions with them.

I want to prepare my children for death! That’s my goal as a parent. Ultimately, you want to prepare them for death by speaking and living out the Gospel in front of them, at close range.

* The way you respond to your own sin and failures when you blow it
* The way you relate as a husband and wife in your marriage
* The way you respond to setbacks and disappointments in life
* The way that you prize and cherish certain things more than others in this world
* The way you plug into the life of Christ with other believers in small group, worship, and service
* The way you handle your money and what you invest in

There’s one word at the top of your parenting job description: faithfulness. It’s our job to be faithful. It’s God’s job to bring results! If you the two confused, you’ll be frustrated!

1. **Parenting is a Work of God’s Grace More than Our Own Effort**

We are Gospel-dependent, grace-dependent, Christ-dependent parents! We have to cry out to God to do what only He can do!

**I Corinthians 15:10** “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”

“Our reliance on everything but grace has us exhausted, worried, and secretly counting the days until our little cherubs are out of their diapers, or in school, or out of adolescence, or out of the house. The desire to rush through one stage to get to the next is the idiocy of believing that the grass really is greener on the other side. It isn't, of course. Don't rush the future; generally parenting only gets harder.”

***How Children Raise Parents***, Dan Allender, p. 131

1. **Remember that You Have Great Influence But Absolutely No Power to Change a Heart**

“Just because I have many weaknesses doesn't necessarily mean my kids will suffer. I realized a truth that had lain hidden for so long. Though I had wonderful, godly parents, I still grew up with certain disappointments that I wanted to rectify as a parent. It finally dawned on me that I had asked something of my parents that they could never be: I had wanted them to love me as only God can love me. And now I wanted to love my kids as only God can love them…

 I realized God had called me to focus my efforts on introducing my kids to God, even using my own failures and inadequacies as compelling causes for my children to find their refuge in Him. What will it be for you? Will you try to compete with God, or will you work to introduce your children to the one true God?”

***Sacred Parenting***, Gary L. Thomas, p. 44

* Are you competing with God or are you working hard to introduce your kids to the One true God?

"The change of heart that comes with new birth solves many lesser parenting problems. But every parent faces a dilemma. We cannot give our children new birth. Children cannot take it. They cannot purchase it. We cannot earn it… every parent is profoundly dependent on God to finish the parenting process by giving each child new birth.”

***Gospel-Powered Parenting****: How the Gospel Shapes and Transforms Parenting*, by William P. Farley, pgs 53-54

**John 1:12–13** “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

As much as you love your children, you can’t make them follow Christ! You can't take out a heart of stone and put in a heart of flesh.

**Recommended Reading**

***The Faithful Parent –*** *A Biblical Guide to Raising a Family*, P&R Pub., 2010

***Parenting is More than a Formula***, Jim Newheiser, P&R Pub., 2015

***Parenting –*** *14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family,* Paul Tripp, Crossway, 2016

***Age of Opportunity –*** *A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens*, Paul Tripp, P&R Pub., 2001