

Christian Urban Legends
“A Godly Home Guarantees Godly Kids ~ part 4”

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / Aug. 10, 2008

A godly home does not guarantee godly kids...but a godly home can lay the foundation for the grace of God and the Gospel of Christ that *alone* can produce godly kids.

I. Stop Looking for Some Kind of Parenting Guarantee

Prov. 22:6 “Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.”

A stronger and more correct translation and interpretation of this verse would be: “If you bring up a child *in his way* [i.e. the way he is bent (as a sinner)] when he is old he will not depart from it.”

II. Start Living and Speaking the Gospel as Much as Possible

I Timothy 5:16

III. Keep Praying for God’s Grace and Mercy to Explode in the Life of Your Child

Colossians 4:2, 12

IV. Never Forget that the Trials of Parenting are All About Your Growth and God’s Glory!

A. A Parenting Trial Can Expose Our Pride and Can Put the Big ‘Whammy’ on Judging!

I Peter 5:5-6 “...and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”

2 Corinthians 10:12 “For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.”

B. A Parenting Trial Exposes the Shallowness of Our Love ~ and Teaches Us to Love Like God Loves Us!

Philippians 1:9-11 “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”

“In my numbness I wondered what I should be learning from God. I knew that I could not reject Barbara, and the temptation to do so faded pretty quickly. But what *was* I supposed to do now? On one level, there wasn’t much I could do. I doubted if a phone call would be welcome. But one idea did occur to me, an idea that forced me into some healthy self-examination. It was simply this: Did I love Barbara as she really was - or did I only love my idea of Barbara? I knew from my own counseling that family members often don’t love each other for who they really are. They love the ideal they have created of the other person. Love from God, I knew, is tougher and clearer-eyed. It loves people as they really are. God’s love can be honest about people while holding on to them until that love changes them.”

~ C. John Miller & Barbara Miller Julian, *Come Back, Barbara*, pg. 38-39

“The pain of watching older children move in wrong directions, knowing that no word of rebuke or instruction will reach them, can be overwhelming. The work of God’s grace in a parent’s heart is most fully revealed when, after admitting their helplessness to bring about the change they deeply desire in their children, they persist in love. There’s more to love than we think. The implications of our Lord dying for us ‘while we were yet sinners’ are staggering. Perhaps the great need of the church today is to face how badly we love and then to enter more fully into the costly grace of our forgiving Lord.”

~ C. John Miller & Barbara Miller Julian, *Come Back, Barbara*, pg. 11

Romans 5:8 “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

C. A Parenting Trial of this Magnitude Can Break the Grip of Idolatrous Control that We’ve Been Blind to Before

“Only the Holy Spirit can give the gift of true faith to your children, whether young or grown-up. How often my husband used to pray, ‘Lord, forgive me for trying to play the role of the Holy Spirit in my child’s heart.’ Being a good parent doesn’t instill true faith in Christ in the hearts of our sons and daughters. Such a simple truth is so difficult to learn. Remember: *God has no grandchildren*. Our job is to pray hard and trust God for the results. I’ve found that praying in faith is much harder than running around ‘doing’ for our children. We mothers are especially prone to fixing our children’s problems, aren’t we? From applying bandages to bloody knees to making sure they haven’t forgotten their schoolwork, we believe that if they’re in a crisis, we are required to immediately come to the rescue. For some of us, our prayer needs to be, ‘Lord, let me trust you enough to take my hands off, and let him learn to do this without me.’ We aren’t doing our children any favors if we do for them what they can do for themselves. In fact, we’re only creating dependency on ourselves. Our job is to point them to Christ, while helping in age-appropriate ways. Just as a plant can be overwatered, so our offspring can be over-mothered.

As a biblical counselor, I have seen many mothers of adult children who seem driven to make sure their dear child is fed, warm, happy, clean, and socially acceptable. They seem to be unable to let go. Their whole identity is wrapped up in their children; they become the mothers’ purpose for living. These mothers need to be needed, and sometimes they make an idol of their child’s love or success. The world calls this enabling behavior or co-dependency; but I think a better word be co-idolatry. The good news about calling some action sin, when it really is sin, is that it can be repented of and forgiven. Praise God for his boundless grace!”

~ Elyse Fitzpatrick “Dear Unbelieving Child, How I Long For Your Soul,” *The Afternoon of Life, Finding Purpose and Joy in Midlife*

D. A Parenting Trial Forces Us to Place Our Joy Where it Should’ve Been All Along

“We can rest contentedly in our sins and in our stupidities...but pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world...I am progressing along the path of life in my ordinary contentedly fallen and godless condition, absorbed in a merry meeting with my friends for the morrow or a bit of work that tickles my vanity today, a [vacation], or a new book, when suddenly a stab of abdominal pain that threatens serious disease, or a headline in the newspapers that threatens us all with destruction, sends this whole pack of cards tumbling down. At first, I am overwhelmed, and all my little happinesses look like broken toys. Then, slowly and reluctantly, bit by bit, I try to bring myself into the frame of mind that I should be in at all times. I remind myself that all these toys [we could insert ‘children’] were never intended to possess my heart, that my true good is in another world, and my only real treasure is Christ. And perhaps, by God’s grace, I succeed, and for a day or two become a creature consciously dependent on God and drawing its strength from the right sources. But the moment the threat is withdrawn, my whole nature laps back to the toys... Thus the terrible necessity of tribulation is only too clear.”

~ *The Problem of Pain*, ch. 6 - quoted in *Readings for Meditation and Reflection*, edited by Walter Hooper, p. 71-72

Habakkuk 3:18 “Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.”

E. A Parenting Trial Can Drive You to Prayer Like Never Before

Mark 9:28-29 “...His disciples asked him privately, ‘Why could we not cast it out?’ So He said to them, ‘This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.’”

2 Timothy 2:24-26 “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.”

Luke 18:1 “Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.”

“All my talking about prayer faced a severe test several years ago when Carol and I went through the darkest two-and-a-half-year tunnel we could imagine. Our oldest daughter, Chrissy, had been a model child growing up. But around age sixteen she started to stray...Chrissy not only drew away from us, but also away from God. In time, she even left our home. There were many nights when we had no idea where she was.

As the situation grew more serious, I tried everything. I begged, I pleaded, I scolded, I argued, I tried to control her with money. Looking back, I recognize the foolishness of my actions. Nothing worked; she just hardened more and more. Her boyfriend was everything we did not want for our child.

Were we calling on the Lord through all of this? In a sense we were. But I couldn't help jumping in to take action on my own, too. I was still, to some degree, the point guard wanting to grab the basketball, push it down the floor, make something happen, press through any hole in the defense I could find. But the more I pressed, the worse Chrissy got.”

~ Jim Cymbala, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, p. 59-62