

The Parent/Child Relationship

INTRODUCTION:

A. Case Examples:

1. **ITEM:** A sixteen year old boy comes to your speaker with this startling confession: “I can’t stand my parents. I hate my dad, I wish he was dead. In fact, I tried to kill “
2. **ITEM:** A seventeen year old youth comes to your speaker with this pleading request: “Can I please talk with you. My parents won’t listen. My dad is an elder. He has time for everyone else, but he doesn’t have time for me. He thinks I don’t have anything worth while to say.”
3. **ITEM:** A nineteen year old coed on a Christian college campus comes to your speaker to ask for help. Her problem? For the past six years her father has been involved with her sexually. Her father is supposedly a leader in the Lord’s church.
4. **ITEM:** An adolescent, between the ages of 9 and 14, a resident in a children’s home in California, writes a night time prayer for sinners, wherein she prays: “I admit I am very sinful. I had a hard time with the family. Now I have no family. I was starved when I was little.”
5. **ITEM:** A college junior comes to your speaker and relays a sad message: “My parents have just informed me that I can never come home again. I am no longer their daughter. They never want to see me again.”
6. **ITEM:** On the afternoon prior to the concluding service of a gospel meeting that evening, a seventeen year old girl that has been attending the meeting, calls your speaker with this message and plea: “My mother has just kicked me out of the house. I have no place to go. I wish I were dead. In fact, about a year ago I tried to kill myself. I have been under psychiatric care. Can you help me?”
7. **ITEM:** An early morning emergency phone call, an urgent Saturday morning visit to the office and a desperate plea for help from a hurting and frustrated mother is a nearby congregation. Her problem? The night

before she had discovered that her husband had been going to their daughter's bed before coming to hers.

- B. Each of these seven case examples have a least three major things in common.
1. They are true . . . they actually happened.
 2. They each suggest some serious problems in the area of parent/child relationships.
 3. They each involve a supposedly Christian home or environment.
- C. We have but limited time in which to discuss one of the most important subject areas contained within the home **THE PARENT/CHILD RELATIONSHIP IN THE HOME AND IN THE CHURCH.**
1. It is multifaceted.
 2. It is a sensitive subject for some.
 3. It is important subject for all.
 4. It is needed today as much, if not more, than ever..
- D. The home and its parent/child relationships are being torn apart today by:
1. Child abuse.
 2. Parental abuse.
 3. Separations.
 4. Divorce.
 5. Neglect
 6. Worldliness
- E. The home:
1. The home is the one universal relationship among men.
 2. The home is the oldest institution on earth.
 3. The home is a spiritual relationship established by God for man's good and Gods glory.
 4. The home continues to play a major role in God's plan for mankind.
- F. God charged the home with the responsibility to bear and rear children.
1. It takes a lot longer to rear children than it does to bear them. Both can be painful.
 2. A study reveals that between birth and age 21, a child spends.
 - a. 105,000 hours of awaken time
 - b. 2,100 hours in Bible School and Worship
 - c. 10,000 hours at secular school
 - d. 92,000 hours at home
- G. God has established Biblically-sanctioned roles for each member of the family.
1. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. **Genesis 2:24**
 2. Husbands

- a. Husbands are to love their wives. Ephesians 5:25
- b. As heads of the home, husbands are to lead the home. Ephesians 5:23
- 3. Wives
 - a. Wives are to love their husbands. Titus 2:4
 - b. Wives are to be in submission to their husbands. Ephesians 5:22
- 4. Children
 - a. Children are to obey their parents. Ephesians 6:1-3
 - b. Respect through the years. “Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old.” **Proverbs 23:22**
- 5. Parents are to treat their children properly. Ephesians 6:4
- H. While time just does not permit an in-depth consideration of both the parent’s role to the child and the child’s role to the parents, I want to emphasize some areas that both hold in common, and in so doing lean more in the direction of the relationship of the parent to the child.
- I. As we discuss the parent/child relationship, bear in mind that a “relationship” means “two closely related things.”
 - 1. In our case it is not things, but people, and in particular parents and their children.
 - 2. Too many times we treat people as things and things as people.
- J. Good relationships do not automatically happen. They must be worked at in all areas of Christian living.
 - 1. Some authored a book entitled, *Help! I’m a Parent*. Perhaps the title says it all.
 - 2. Simply having children does not make one a good parent anymore than having a piano makes one a concert pianist, or having a plunger makes one a union plumber.
- H. Every set of parents and children have some measure of a relationship. With this in mind, the question becomes, What kind of relationship do they have?
 - 1. Is it good or bad?
 - 2. Is it positive or negative?
 - 3. Is it acceptable or unacceptable to the parents?
 - 4. Is it acceptable or unacceptable to the children?
 - 5. Is it healthy or sick?
 - 6. Is it consistent or inconsistent?
 - 7. Is it conducive to growth, maturation, and development, or does it stifle growth?
 - 8. Is it a model relationship or does it need to be altered and improved?
- I. A relationship is not something one gets or buys or has. But rather, a relationship is something that comes out of the way we treat another. A relationship is earned. A good one is earned by doing a good job and a poor one is earned through neglect, thereby doing a poor job.

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 9. Is it a relationship that God would approve or disapprove of?
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- M. Too many times we treat people as things . . . and things as people.
- N. When failures come in the home, it is not that the home as a divinely appointed institution that has failed, but rather that people have failed in their divinely appointed roles.

THE PARENT/CHILD RELATIONSHIP HAS A PURPOSE.

- A. The purpose of the parent/child relationship is for it to be something in which children can grow, tackle their problems, overcome them, and as did Jesus in [Luke 2:52](#) – “. . . increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. “
- B. Obviously, there is more to a relationship than liking or wanting to please each other.
1. It is reaching out to each other and offering each other something of value.

2. It is a relationship wherein love is offered. This love that is offered has some very important qualities. Three of them are Respect . . . Understanding . . . and Limits
- a. **RESPECT** - I speak not of the respect of children toward their parents: I hope that the parents can earn that. I am speaking of the parents' respect for their children. This means several things . . . some obvious . . . some subtle.
 1. Respecting their pride.
 2. Respecting their possessions and the things they hold dear.
 3. Respecting their right to be different.
 4. Respecting their dependence upon you. Protect them from harm.
 5. Not expecting the worst from them. Trust that this may be the day in which they will find a better way.
 6. Respecting their choices and preferences.
 7. Respecting their identity.
 8. Respecting their right to grow up.
 9. Respecting their right to make mistakes.
 10. Take him seriously as a person.
 - b. **UNDERSTANDING**~— The gift of knowing what it must be like to be in the other's shoes and how one would feel if he were there. Empathy.
 1. It is the ability to share joys and griefs and in a sense the capacity to be a child on occasions.
 2. The difficult part about all this understanding is that the parent must know what it feels like to be a child.
 - c. **LIMITS** — The ability to let the children learn what life is really like, but within firm fast limits which will prevent them from being hurt. Children respect firmness but not control. We want to help children, but:
 1. A lot of what we call helping is controlling.
 2. A lot of what we call helping is manipulating.
 A lot of what we call helping is meddling.
 4. A relationship that helps, that produces love, must also be:
 - a. Forgiving
 - b. Warm
 - c. Honest
 - Interesting
 5. You don't help a child by giving it a blank check in life. Thereby leaving it to determine all of its behaviors by itself.

PARENTS SHOULD BE KNOWLEDGEABLE OF THE NEEDS OF THEIR CHILDREN.

- A. From birth on all children need:
- proper nutrition
 - proper clothing

- health care
- protection from outside dangers
- protection from their own impulses.

1. Parents are the major protectors of children . . . stewards of their proper care.
2. In cases where parents are unable to protect the children from dangers around them and within them, the children lose confidence in their parents and become frightened.

B. Children must have a good emotional climate.

1. Children need to feel loved. They need to KNOW they are loved.
 - a. A great deal of their eventual sense of self-worth will be related to the presence or absence of love.
 - b. That love needs to be supportive and reinforce good behavior in a positive way.
 2. Children need to feel wanted.
 - a. They must be convinced that:
 1. Their parents love them and do not just tolerate them.
 2. Society has a use for them. Poster in St. Louis: “God made me, and God doesn’t make junk.
 3. Their families look forward to being with them.
 4. They bring satisfaction and joy to people by their mere existence.
 - b. Unfortunately, many children do not have this assurance. Social, economic, and physical pressures on their parents interfere with joyful acceptance of the children.
2. The end result is that children become insecure and bitter.

C. Every child needs to be directed.

1. Poster: “God couldn’t be everywhere so He invented mothers.”
2. As the child grows older, he must know that he can trust the people who are responsible for him, that they can teach him what is right and wrong, good and bad, etc.
3. As children develop a conscience, they look to their parents for a value system. This underscores further the need for the Bible to be the standard for all of life.
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- D. Increasingly, as a child grows older, he has to feel that his parents trust him; that they have confidence in his inherent goodness, and that they want him to become an independent person.
1. If parents overwhelm a child with suspicion, reproaches, and unnecessary limitations and restrictions, they handicap his development.
 2. Be patient with them as they deviate momentarily. Just think how patient God has to be with us.
 3. Basic trust needs to be built up in children very early.
- E. Proper spiritual guidance — A Child needs to be able to reach deep inside himself and find peace and inner calm . . . a peace they can find when the parents are not around friends, God provides that peace.
- F. Children need to be stimulated intellectually.
1. Some sources have indicated that more than half the homes in the United States are educationally deprived.
 2. Parents should provide good educational experiences in the home. Books, conversations, encouragement to learn, etc. Good learning habits will help children better learn the Bible.
- G. Children need to develop socially.
1. Parents really need to help in the area of social development for their children.
 2. Many bad influences should be avoided.

SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS TOWARD ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING A GOOD PARENT/CHILD RELATIONSHIP.

- A. **Proverbs 22:6** – “Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.”
1. Every home should teach its members and train them to respect for:
 - a. God
 - b. Home
 - c. Self

- d. Fellowman
- e. Government
- f. God's Word
- g. Morality
- h. Human dignity
- i. Etc.

2. Teach respect and live respect before them.

B. **Ephesians 6:4** - "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." This passage, properly applied, would prevent a lot of child abuse and neglect as well as other parent/child problems. A lot of what we blame children for is actually the fault of the parents. We project fault and blame on to them.

C. Have good communication.

Talk with them . . . not at them.

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1. Talk with them . . . not at them.

2. Listen to them.

a. If you won't listen . . . someone else will.

b. It will hurt deeply when you discover that they can talk with other adults better than they can talk with you.

D. Discipline . . . but discipline with love and not bitterness.

1. Chastise but do not beat.

2. Be in control of both yourself and the situation when you discipline.

E. Be willing to say "I'm sorry" when you make a mistake . . . and, you will make mistakes.

F. Offer an atmosphere of security. Children need a solid rock during shifting times.

G. Be dependable and consistent.

H. Be truthful with them. Do not lie or deceive.

I. Spend time together. They don't want objects . . . they want you.

J. Tell them you love them. In many homes the only time "I love you" is heard is on the soap operas.

K. Answer their question truthfully. Tell them about sex. If they don't receive right information from you, they may receive wrong or distorted information

from others. Example: 26 year old lady who thought if she kissed a boy she could become pregnant.

- L. Don't show favoritism and play one child against each other or your spouse.
 - a. Rebekah tried it and divided her family.
 - b. Jacob practiced it and alienated ten of his twelve sons.

CONCLUSION:

- A. In today's world of microwave speed, channel surfing and drive-through everything's (including weddings), words like "traditions," family roots," and legacy" seem to fit more comfortably in a discussion of times gone by.
- B. One of the most important things we have to offer children is ourselves . . . someone they can trust. . . love at times . . . dislike at others . . . reach to . . . learn from . . . quarrel with . . . someone they know will not let them down.
- C. Someone has written: "A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove . . . But the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child.
- D. Where will your children be in eternity? The kind of parent/child relationship you have will go a long way in determining the answer to that question.
- E. It is characteristic of human kind to want a pattern, an example, a model to follow. The Bible contains the best one I know . . . God and His Son. God and His children.
- D. When it comes to the parent/child relationship in your home, will you be a rejoicing Hannah or a grieving Jacob. You hold the answer.
- E. When it comes to the parent/child relationship in your home, will you be a rejoicing Hannah or a grieving Jacob. You hold the answer.
- F. Parents . . . even a separation, custody decree, or a divorce . . . does not end your responsibility as a parent.
- G. Amazon.com lists over 10,000 book titles under the subject of "Parenting" . . . but friends . . . **(HOLD UP BIBLE)** this is the best book on parenting that I know.
- H. Be thankful for faithful Christian parents!
- I. **God's Plan for Man's Salvation.**