

Parenting Freedom

Family Night – Wednesday, August 21, 2024

Two Primary Sources:

Parenting by Paul David Tripp

Setting Parents Free by John L. Cox

Parenting is a holy calling.

- The world does not value children the way God does.
- Children are not a burden, but a great blessing. (Gen. 1:28; Ps. 127:3-5; Matt. 18:10)

Start with yourself, not your kids.

“In the event of rapid cabin depressurization, parents travelling with small children, please place the oxygen mask on yourself first before assisting your child and other passengers.”

- What is a parent? What is your God-given purpose?
- The Ownership View: these children belong to me, so I can do what I want with them. These parents are driven by their own vision of what they want for and from their children.
- The Ambassador View: these children belong to God, and I serve as His ambassador. These parents are driven by God’s vision for His children.
- These two views produce very different methods of parenting, shaping our sense of identity as parents, how we define the work, how we measure success, and how we handle failure.

Fear of Failure

- Most parents are terrified of screwing up their children.
- We are being judged by a culture of psychological-emotional legalism.
- We are over-reacting to our own parent’s failures.
- We are putting pressure on each other to succeed.
- Most parenting books and classes only increase that pressure to succeed.

You’re going to fail and it’s going to be OK.

Why? Because good parenting is a RELATIONSHIP not a task or a performance. Like any important relationship, we mess up. We go back in. Repair. Restore. Repeat.

Our perfection is not the basis of our relationship with God either, but rather his patience and grace with our sin.

Be a humble parent, not a “perfect” parent.

Not only is this Biblical, but it is also backed up by research! Technically “perfect” parents do not produce well-adjusted children. Instead, “good enough” parents produce the healthiest children overall. Failure and humble repair are essential to good parenting!

God, in his perfect wisdom, did not call you to be a parent because you are able. You don’t feel adequate because you are not adequate!

But this is also true... God has given you everything you need to do the job he’s called you to do. God never calls us to do something unless He has given us what we need to do the job. Parenting is nothing less than daily, humble reliance upon God’s grace.

- Grace breaks the self-assured, self-reliant spirit.
- Grace frees us from having to deny our weaknesses.
- Grace makes us patient, gentle, and tender towards our children.
- Grace liberates us from the prison of regret.

Final Note: there WILL be plenty of helpful parenting tips and strategies in this class after tonight, but I sincerely believe this is the best place to start and what most parents need to hear more than any tips or strategies.