

Parenting Freedom (6)

Family Night – Wednesday, November 6, 2024

How do I help my kids deal with pain and disappointment?

- We were designed by God to learn about love and strength and wisdom and submission, but we were not designed to deal with suffering.
- Life is not the way it supposed to be...
 - In what ways have your children suffered?
- You cannot protect your child from suffering, but you can teach them to suffer well.

Wrong Ways to Deal with Suffering

- Attacking Others – protesting the pain in outbursts of emotion (tantrums)
- Attacking Self – living with shame and perfectionism
- Emotional Disconnect – pushing pain down, creating anxiety and depression
- Acting Out – numbing or escaping the pain with destructive behaviors

Coping with Pain in the World

“We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope.” – Romans 5:3-4

- “Pain itself does not harm children. Unresolved pain harms children. Suffering alone harms children.”
- Walking through pain with our kids is an opportunity for connection.
- Resist the urge to rescue them from manageable pains.
- Pain heals in loving relationships, and we don’t really know why. (Image of God?)
- Don’t “blow off” your child’s pain.
- Don’t try to fix it either.
- Instead, your goal is to simply “be with” them as they suffer.
 - “You are hurting. I see it and I care. I cannot make it go away, but I love you and I’m not going anywhere.”
- This is how we see Jesus engaging people’s pain, even before he heals them. (Lazarus)

- Sadness is a gift. The Bible calls it “mourning”. It is the natural human response to suffering and part of the healing process.
- They will learn from our example. How do I face pain?
- When you fail, go back and own it.

Dealing with Shame

- Shame is pain about being me.
 - Guilt says, “I did something bad.”
 - Shame says, “I AM something bad.”
- As children grow older in a sinful world, they start to feel shame. We all do!
- To help our kids deal with shame, we need to un-shame them.
- Normalize Failure – Shame only works when a person feels alone in their unique badness.
 - “The only difference between you and me is that I was born twenty something years before you and God put me in authority over you. Other than that, I’m just a guy who is screwed up and still learning—just like you!”
- Be careful of creating a “perfectionistic vibe” in the home. Temper performance with grace.
- On the flip side of this, some children relish the opportunity to shame their parents... and we indulge it! Don’t shame your kids and don’t allow them to shame you.