



Discussion Guide

Parenting Practically Works

"Family Matters" Part 4
Jeff Wall 5-2 2010

If you are a parent or a person who needs to know how you can support the parents around you this study is worth your time. To all you grandparents out there please engage in coaching the parents around you!

Being in a family the most important thing in the life of a child. As a parent we often wonder if the children are ever going to "arrive"? Their maturity seems so far off in the future. But when they do arrive, it makes the effort all worthwhile. As I look at my three son's I see the results of the most important time Sherri and I have spent over the past 27years.

This guide is about practical actions for parenting. In the course of this we might learn more about ourselves, it could help us reduce some stress, give us practical encouragement and most importantly help us to remember that we are not alone; we have support regardless if it's raising children or not. It is critical to know when raising children every parent needs a strategy that works for both child and parent. There is not a "one fix" formula.

OPEN YOUR GROUP WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE—SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO DISCUSS.

WHAT GOD SAYS TO CHILDREN

Read Ephesians 6:1–2 aloud. What does it command children? What is the promise if obeyed?

- Why is it important that we help children lack honor? What are some potential consequences if we don't?
- When kids lack honor we should not fight the battle alone. What are some resources that can help? Why is it essential to have the support of God and others so children learn honor?

WHAT GOD SAYS TO PARENTS

1. DON'T EXASPERATE YOUR CHILDREN.

What advice does Ephesians 6:4a give to parents?

- How do we typically react when we are provoked?
- How have you seen children react to the provoking behavior of their parents?

What exasperates children?

- Unclear boundaries
- Unpredictable discipline
- Unbalanced criticism
- Unreasonable demands
- Unspoken expectation
- Undeserved or unresolved anger

Discipleship—We have all exasperated our children, intentionally or unintentionally. Choose one example from the list above that most closely describes how you have exasperated your children at one time. Reflect on ways to stop the behavior. Write down one that you can commit to for the following week.

2. DISCIPLINE YOUR CHILDREN.

How does Ephesians 6:4b advise us to bring our children up?

- What are some examples of discipline? What effective methods have you seen that are consistent with God's Word?
- How can you discipline a child without exasperating him or her?

What benefits of discipline are listed in Hebrews 12:10–11?

- Everyone needs to be disciplined. How does God choose to discipline us?
- Discipline is always for the child's benefit. What type of discipline would not be for the benefit of the child? Why?
- Discipline is painful. Why do you think that is? Is discipline really more painful for the parent? Why or why not?

Discipleship—Discipline starts out with the corrections you give and may evolve to the consequences you allow. What consequences have you allowed in your child's life that has been tough but disciplinary? Why was it so tough? How did your child benefit? What did you learn as a parent? Share your story with someone briefly.

3. NURTURE YOUR CHILDREN.

Love is spelled **L.E.A.D.**

According to John 1:12, what was given to those who believe in Jesus?

- What are some practical ways to teach a child about Christ? How have you seen some families develop a Christ-centered environment in the home?
- When do you think a child is ready to accept Christ? Why?

Love is spelled **P.R.A.Y.**

What sin is spoken of in 1 Samuel 12:23?

- There is power in prayer. How can we show this to our children?
- Why is it important to pray for our children?
- Colossians 1:9 guides us in what to pray for. What have you heard children pray for?

Love is spelled **G.R.O.W.**

In Galatians 4:19, what is felt in the process of becoming like Christ?

- What pains could a child experience as they grow as a believer in Jesus? How could a parent help?
- What pains do we feel as we strive to become more like Christ? Are they similar to a child's?

What does Deuteronomy 11:18–21 tell us to teach our children?

- How can God's Word be taught in the home? How do parents take the lead in teaching their children from the Bible?
- What would be some creative opportunities to share with a child from the Bible?
- Why would a parent ask a child to memorize Bible verses? How does it benefit the child?

Mission—The greatest responsibility parents have is to teach their children about Jesus. It has eternal implications! Take a few minutes and evaluate how you are leading your children to Christ. Have you developed an environment where discussions about Jesus are welcomed? Your child needs to be ministered to by you through reading the Scripture together, talking about it and praying with them.

4. SHOW COMPASSION TO YOUR CHILDREN.

Read Ephesians 4:32. What example do we follow for showing compassion?

- What are some examples of how a parent shows compassion to a child?
- How have you seen a child react to a parent's compassion? How have you seen a child react to a parent's *lack* of compassion?

According to Psalm 103:13, how does the Lord show us compassion?

- What are some ways that God shows us compassion?

- What can we learn from God's compassion that we can demonstrate to our children?

Ministry—God's compassion for us gives the example and capability to teach it to our children. How do you teach your children to be compassionate with others? Serving in ministry is one way to show them how to be compassionate in a Christlike way. Identify a ministry opportunity for your family to participate in that gives a solid example of God's compassion.

Having your children join you in serving the Family at Friends will shape their lives in amazing ways.

PERSONAL APPLICATION AND COMMITMENT:

"By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born" Hebrews 11:23 (NIV)
Amram, Moses' mother, released her baby to protect him from certain death. She had to let him go into the Nile river with uncertainty where and how he would survive. This is a great example how **parenting is planned uncertainty**. How can this truth ease some concerns you may have about raising children? How can this perspective change your decision pattern with raising your children?

"What matters is a faith that expresses itself through love." Galatians 5:6b (GWT)
We cannot guarantee our children's choices or the circumstances they will face. So we must have **faith through love**. God is the perfect Father, but even his children make poor choices and fall into circumstances that are less than he would want.

Although there are many books, guides, and qualified professionals that can help, without God at the center it's going to be an uphill battle. Make a commitment to constantly pray for your children, family, and other families in our community and the world. What other commitment toward applying this message will you make that can help you be a godly influence as a parent? Share this commitment with someone.