

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabile.org.

Date: July 18, 2010

Title: Parents - Working together for the Common Good

Text: Ephesians 6:4

Theme: Parents are the primary means of reaching and teaching their children for Christ and His Church. They have the first touch in training up the next generation of Christians.

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Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in the Storyline of the Bible. She is determined by design to have a God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching focused on personal discipleship through intentional and systematic instruction; a Global-impacting mission that resolves to be a church planting church; and a Grace-based fellowship where disciples are invited to live under a reigning grace characterized by a Gospel-driven sanctification that celebrates a divine monergism to the Christian life.

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Introduction:

Parenting is a God-given role and responsibility. First, it works for the common good. Parenting enables families, churches and societies to exist with order and health. Second, it is the means of “discipling/training/mentoring” the next generation of Christians. Finally, it is the privilege of leaving a personal legacy in your wake.

THE BIG PICTURE:

Ephesians 5:22-6:9

- Wives
- Husbands
- Children
- Parents
- Slaves/Masters

The Storyline:

The first human institution God put into His script was the family. First, He wrote into the Story the marriage covenant and then within the covenant, children. This becomes the most basic and fundamental unit within the Story in which and through which God works out His Story. The family is a non-negotiable. No story can long continue where such is neglected or altered. We might speak of same-sex marriages, but such will be the ruin of the family, church, society and nations.

The Problem:

However, just as marriage makes the husband head, so also children make a husband and wife parents. This is the biblical reality although it might not be the daily experience. A husband and wife might not exercise nor respect headship and neither fully and intentionally engage as parents of children.

In the absence of intentional and aggressive parenting, children will be lawless and self-centered. The child marked as a spoiled brat or a little monster will grow older. They will stay lawless and self-centered.

Outline:

- A. Instructions for the Children (vv.1-3)
 -- See July 11, 2010 manuscript
- B. Instructions for the Parents (v. 4)

“The common denominator between success and failure seems to be the spiritual depth and sincerity of the parents, **especially the spiritual depth and sincerity of the father**. There seems to be a strong correlation between the faith, commitment, and sincerity of the family’s head and the spiritual vitality of his adult children.” ([emphasis his] William P. Farley, *Gospel-Powered Parenting: How the Gospel shapes and transforms parenting*, 15).

As we consider this divine directive, allow me to provide five initial assumptions made by Bill Farley in his book, *Gospel-Powered Parenting: How the Gospel shapes and transforms parenting* (pp. 20-36).

1. You cannot be a perfect parent.
2. God is sovereign, and the means He uses to reach and teach children are the parents.
3. Effective parents assume that a good offense is better than defense.
4. Effective parents understand new birth.
5. Effective parents are not child-centered. They are God-centered.

1. Do not provoke the child to anger

It is of interest to note how the first statement is one of prohibition, a negative command. Don’t provoke.

“This involves avoiding attitudes, words, and actions which would drive a child to angry exasperation or resentment and thus rules out excessively severe discipline, unreasonably harsh demands, abuse of authority, arbitrariness, unfairness, constant nagging and condemnation, subjecting a child to humiliation, and all forms of gross insensitivity to a child’s needs and sensibility” (Rogers and Rogers, 446)

- Reasons why a child might be exasperated
 - a. Unrealistic expectations
 - b. Too demanding, exceeds ability

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

In passing let me comment on the word “train” found in Proverbs 22:6. The Hebrew word is used four times in the OT. Three times it is used of “dedicating something”. It is used this way in Deuteronomy 20:5 concerning a house and in 1 Kings 8:63 and 2 Chronicles 7:5 for the dedicating of the house of the LORD. It is then used in Proverbs 22:6. I found it interesting how a similar word from within the same word family means, “To hang or strangle” (2 Sam. 17:23; Nahum 2:12).

“**Chanak**, which we translate train up or initiate, signifies also dedicate; and is often used for the consecrating any thing, house, or person, to the service of God. Dedicate, therefore, in the

first instance, your child to God; and nurse, teach, and discipline him as God's child, whom he has intrusted to your care. These things observed, and illustrated by your own conduct, the child (you have God's word for it) will never depart from the path of life." (Adam Clarke's Commentary on Proverbs 22:6)

c. Your marriage is in disorder

- Husband, no functional headship/love
- Wife, no functional submission/respect

d. Your "physical life" is in disorder

- Your schedule – too busy
- Learn to live with less

e. Your "spiritual life" is in disorder

- Fathers, no functional headship
- Mothers, no functional respect

2. Bring them Up

Ektrepho, "To rear up to maturity, to cherish or train:--bring up, nourish." "To provide for with tender care." It is only used twice in the New Testament.

"for no one ever hated his own flesh, but **nourishes** and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church" (Eph. 5:29).

"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but **bring them up** in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

- The meaning is the same for how a husband relates to his wife and child, but the application is different.
- You would not treat your wife in the same manner in which you treat your child.
- Your child should know you have their best interests and well-being in mind.

There are two notable actions identified in the training of a child.

First, **Paideia**, "Tutorage, i.e. education or training; instruction, nurture."

Ephesians 6:4 tells parents to nurture or instruct their children. Second Timothy 3:16 tells us how the Word of God is a means of instructing children. Hebrews 12 calls us not to despise or reject the instruction of the Lord (Heb. 12:5); as we will note this instruction or discipline can be heavy, but the end of all instruction is for the benefit of the recipient (Heb. 12:10-13). This instruction identifies sons (Heb. 12:7, 8). In the absence of this instruction children are

“illegitimate” (Heb. 12:8 [the KJV translates the word as “bastard”]).

When we fail in our responsibility to instruct our children, we are orphaning them. They become the prey of all ill things. What I care about right now are the fathers who convey the idea of being too busy to care for their children and dismiss the responsibility to the mother or institution or church. This is wrong and it must stop. I fully recognize there are seasons when our energy and attention is limited, but let us not allow this to be the pattern. Your most valuable asset apart from your wife is your child.

- Notice the **POSITIVE** tone of TRAINING
- **POSITIVE** TRAINING
 - Physical life skills
 - Spiritual life skills
 - This requires time
 - This requires attention
- You cannot . . .
 - Escape the responsibility
 - Delegate away

Father (and mothers), somehow this area appears to be significantly absent from how we train our children. The training we are called to bring is pervasive. No area is left untouched. It is a training that takes into account the individualism of the child, but leans on the wisdom of God for the process and outcome. It is relentless and never gives up. Again, I would no more turn my wife and child over to a pack of wolves than I would relent in my fight for both my wife and child. For me, this includes my grandchildren.

The second notable action identified in training is admonition.

Second, "Admonition" **Nouthesia**

- To train a child also **includes**
 1. saying “NO”,
 2. establishing “RULES”
 3. and showing the “NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR DISOBEDIENCE”
 - In the absence of either, you are not fully training your child.
 - Healthy parenting flows from a healthy marriage.
- Consider how **The Book of Proverbs** speaks to this idea
- Both the positive and negative aspects of training and instructing are presented
 - To Hear (Prov. 1:8; 4:1, 10; 22:17)
 - To Listen (Prov. 5:7; 7:24; 8:6, 32; 13:1; 19:20; 23:19; 23:22)
 - To Receive (Prov. 1:3; 2:1)

In addition to hearing, listening and receiving notice the other aspect of bring up a child Prov. 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13; 29:15, 17.

The word **nouthetic** calls us to persevere in the process. **Nouthetic** is largely captured by the idea of confrontation or “in your face”. When parenting your child there will be those occasions when you as a father will need to be “in their face”. You will be challenged as a parent as to who is in charge. The National Geographic Network has a program called “Dog Whisperer” featuring Cesar Millan. Cesar “speaks” fluent dog. One of the working principles he operates from is this, “There is a pack leader and as the owner of the dog/dogs it better be you.” That principle is equally true in your home and in parenting. You must be “pack leader”. It would be wrong for us to assume this implies or encourages “bullying” or exploitation, but if this idea is not celebrated, then the home, church and society will suffer and fail.

Just as a child is persistent in “testing the waters” and “checking out each and every border” so must you be equally persistent in calling out the challenge and putting down the insurrection. Why? Because we are involved in spiritual warfare and Satan is out to destroy you and your family. He wants to capture the soul of your sons and daughters. Parenting isn’t about your popularity poll or where your standing is among other parents and their teenage children. Parenting is about you strapping on your belt and pulling up your boots and working the soil and pulling the weeds.

Before I provide some guidelines in this area, let me put this aspect of training your child in its proper context. First, when you have to discipline a child with force never allow them to believe your love for them is conditioned on their behavior or response. Make sure you work from grace. Let them know at all times how you love without condition, accept without requirement, forgive without limit, favor without merit and serve without reward. Their **position** before you will never change. It is only their practice that is wrong. Teach them how within them lies a wicked heart that compels and pushes them toward evil and you desire for them to seek first and above all God. We train with force this idea.

Shepherding the Sheep: (What’s the NEXT STEP?)

- Paul provides for us a picture of what a home looks like **in Christ**.
- Husbands have headship.
- Wives are to respect that headship.
- Children are to respect the collective headship of father/mother.
- Parents are to train their children.
- Let us work from this idea and seek to celebrate and embody such principles in our homes and churches.