

Biblical Parenting —

Foundational Essentials for Faithful Dads and Moms

Geoffrey R. Kirkland

Christ Fellowship Bible Church

My son, keep my words, And treasure my commandments within you. Keep my commandments and live, And my teaching as the apple of your eye. —Proverbs 7:1-2

No one can overstate how important parenting is. God entrusts the important duty and joyous privilege of caring for His precious creatures by pointing them constantly, passionately, urgently, and Christocentrically to the gospel of grace. But how could one summarize biblical parenting? What are some foundational essentials for faithful dads and moms? This essay will provide a few.

I. INSTRUCT your children.

Teachers disseminate information to their pupils. Parents must, in like manner, pass on God's truth to their children. The parents have the primary duty and responsibility *in all of life's ambitions and endeavors* to take biblical truth and teach the next generation to fear the Lord. If parents do everything else and yet fail in this area, they have utterly failed as parents. God commands parents to teach the next generation (Ps 78:1-8) and teach them the fear of the Lord (Prov 1:7) and train up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph 6:4).

II. INTERCEDE for your children.

A parent can do nothing more powerful and beneficial for the children than to pray regularly for their conversion. To intercede means that a parent brings the child before God's almighty throne pleading for God's grace to touch their souls, for God's mercy to regenerate them, for God's power to control them, and for God's beauty to satisfy them. Parents must pray that Christ would savingly touch their children. Parents must pray that the children must pursue Christ as their supreme and highest ambition in life — above *all* else. Parents, if you neglect anything, neglect not the duty of praying and interceding for your children.

III. IMPLORE your children.

To implore is to beg and exhort. God commands all men everywhere to repent. On behalf of God, parents must use His Word and implore each of their children to repent and be reconciled to God. Parents must instill this in their children from the earliest days and implore them to trust in Christ and turn from their sin to be saved. Parents must implore each child to think rightly about God, to turn solidly from sin, to trust unreservedly to Christ, and to follow passionately the risen Christ. Parents must implore individually, at family worship, and in both planned and unplanned settings.

IV. IMITATE for your children.

To imitate Christ is one of the most powerful tools that a parent has. As children see their parents pursue Christ and the knowledge of Him, and as they see the parents imitate Christ, walk as He walked, love what He loved, hate what He hated, obey just as He obeyed, pray as He prayed, children will be indelibly impacted by this. Parents must repent when they've sinned. They must ask for forgiveness whenever needed. They must imitate Christ before they can pass it on. Parents can never pass on to the children what they do not possess themselves — a Christlike and holy life.

V. INFORM your children.

No greater need could ever be taught to the children than the coming reality of heaven and hell. Parents must inform their children of the wrath to come and the blessedness of heaven. Parents must urgently and passionately plead with their children to see God's fury at sin and to fly to Christ quickly and unhesitatingly for refuge from the coming storm and then, and only then, will they find God's mercy abundantly poured out and richly available to cover their sin and Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice. Parents have a duty to inform the children that life is short and eternity is long. Parents must declare to their children that as long as heaven endures, so will hell endure. As powerful and as overwhelming as God's love and grace is in heaven, so powerful and overwhelming will his hatred and punishment be in hell. As glorious will it be to be in the immediate presence of God's glory in the eternal beauty of heaven, so horrible will it be to be in the immediate presence of God's wrath in the eternal torments of the Lake of Fire. Parents, if you love your children, tell them regularly to think often of eternity and their destiny.