

From the Book
Lasting Success
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Chapter Two

Parent - Child Relationships

That men may know that thou, whose name alone is
JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth. Psalm 83:18
Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.
Ephesians 6:4b

Military historians focus on the locations where great weapons of war were put to work and decisive battles were fought. The basis for victory over the enemies of our children and civilized culture is summarized in the verses above. Parents have an indispensable role in taming rebellion and building character in the attitudes of their children. If parents neglect this role, their children can grow up to be defenseless casualties of “feel good” emotions and the deceptive promises of a godless world.

Parents can also harm their children's future by indulging in a self-satisfying and delusional view of love. Yielding to the determined will of little ones is not love. Instead, it ignores the kind of world which the children must be prepared to face. Children can not learn to set misleading emotions aside without parental instruction, controls, and supervision. As objectionable as it may seem to some, this message of

genuine love (parental responsibility) should start on day one in the life of a child.

12 / *Parent - Child Relationships*

Babies are smarter than some parents realize. Babies are to be loved and cuddled, but to pick them up every time they cry suggests that the baby is in command and sends the wrong message. A crying spell that has no connection to need (such as sickness, hunger, or a diaper problem) is good for their health. It is far better for the child to experience genuine parenting than to be spoiled (motivated by untamed emotions), and when older to suffer exploitation by the world.

Some children who were not disciplined at home will later realize that feeling-based decisions can not be trusted, and they will come to regret the fact that much of their life has been wasted.

The following are three examples of emotional immaturity in parents that cause them to be permissive of rebellion by their children:

- A. The attitude that "this is my child, and I have a right to pamper my child" can be very harmful. Such self-indulgence blinds parents to the destructive influence of permissiveness that will eventually come to haunt the life of a self-willed child.
- B. Emotional factors lead some parents away from the fact that the issue between them and the child is, in fact, emotions. Successful parenting is a direct confrontation between (1) the will of parents who should be emotionally mature and (2) the immature but determined will of the child. Wise parents know that God's Word has the answers to life, and they must exercise control at times over their child's choices. When parents fail in this area, their child

will not learn to superintend his or her feelings and make reliable choices.

- C. Parents may foster rebellion by pampering their child because they fear that the child will not love them. But the opposite usually happens. Parents almost always lose the respect of their children when they do not exercise authority with clarity.

13 / Parent - Child Relationships

Many parents want to train up their children to be responsible citizens, but they simply do not know how. Children need to be taught that good decisions are based upon a rational evaluation of predictable outcomes which may have nothing to do with feelings. This should be accomplished by the time they are confronted with peer pressure and sexual drives, which are the subject of this chapter.

The words of the father and mother are the rule of conduct (law) for their children (Exodus 20:12). As God's agents, parents communicate approval and disapproval: "Afterward it [chastisement] yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Hebrews 12:11b). Parents provide a pilot plant version of the larger consequences that befall foolish adult behavior (Psalm 51:8). Parents help children to understand and hate sin (I Corinthians 11:31).

I. Let God Lead— Be Accountable As a Parent

"And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

It is not possible to teach a child until he or she is first brought under control.

- A. God has given parents the authority and responsibility to lovingly superintend their children.
- The idea that parents are not able to control their children is untrue. As babies, we put up a storm in the attempt to control our parents; we should certainly be stronger now as adults than we were as children.

14 / Parent - Child Relationships

- Single men are wise to have an understanding with their potential bride that the husband is the leader in the home. They must then be sure to be humble and loving leaders.
- The husband should be the spiritual leader in his home and the backbone for discipline. No disrespect by the children toward their mother is to be tolerated (Hebrews 12:9-11; I Timothy 2:12).
- Children need a father and mother who care enough about them to be consistent and exercise tough love.
- First-time parents should find out what problems other parents have encountered and be prepared in advance, because they will face the same problems.
- Parents who know Christ gain understanding from the Bible and the indwelling Holy Spirit for the **how, when, and how much** that are needed for parenting.
- Parents are not perfect, but they are to do their best and exercise authority under God (Ephesians 6:1).
- Daily family devotions which are not overly long or complicated are important. **However, being consistent in our daily walk and parenting says more than anything else we say or do.**

- Consistent parental exercise of godly authority for discipline helps children understand the consequences of rebellion and accountability to God.
- Parents should do all they can to lead their little ones to Christ. This means quality time, family togetherness, devotions, church, Sunday school, and Christian youth activities. **When praying aloud during family devotions, praying that the children will accept Christ at an early age is of great value.**
- The lack of understanding among young parents calls for a formal parent-training ministry, such as that outlined here, for young married couples in our churches.

15 / Parent - Child Relationships

- B. Parenting is not for cowards.
- Children come into this world rebellious and untamed. From the Bible and from firsthand observation we know that children go astray from birth and will soon be "speaking lies" (Psalm 58:3).
 - Parenting involves a contest of wills. You can not be successful as a parent until you recognize this truth.
 - From the day babies are born, they have their antennae out to test their parents. They want to see if their parents are determined enough to be in control. Satan is in there trying to give parents a guilt trip for being in charge.
 - Parents who discipline inappropriate behavior and build character into the lives of their children stand in Satan's way. Satan hates children because of their spiritual potential for right living.
 - The child nurtured by love, teachable observations, and firmness will rise above the crowd in character to a

status of strong, self-assured, moral individualism (Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Proverbs 3:1-7).

- C. There is no substitute for the exercise of parental authority!
- For their own good, children should not be allowed to function under the control of their sinful nature.
 - We should not worry about whether or not a child loves us. When we do the job God expects, He sees to it that our children respect us.
 - Without the controlling help of parents, the strong sin-laden emotions within a child will not be brought under control.
 - The church is supportive, but it can not fill the parents' role. Christian schools help, but they can not do what parents must do.
 - Children respect guidelines, and they disrespect weakness. This instinct makes them want to know how strong mom and dad are. Occasionally they will disobey just to determine whether there has been any change.

16 / Parent - Child Relationships

- The price of being a parental wimp is ending up with a child who does not have enough emotional maturity and self-discipline to avoid cheap relationships, drugs, and immorality (Proverbs 10:1b; 17:21; 29:15b).
 - Insofar as parental success is concerned, the price of involvement is not nearly as high as that of failure.
- D. Parental accountability brings great blessings.
- The joy that comes from exercising parental authority is the fulfillment of God's promise—that it may be well in the life of our children and that they may live long and fruitful lives on this earth (Ephesians 6:2-3).
 - Another added benefit of parental accountability is the blessing which ordered and successful lives bring to the

church, society, and future generations (Proverbs 17:6; 29:17; Malachi 2:15).

II. Listen— Be Their Trusted Confidant

- Teach the children that friends can not be trusted with secrets.
- Do not overreact when your children say things you do not like. It is better to correct them gradually than to discourage them from talking.
- Be an understanding sponge; be their encourager; be sure that you, the parent, are there when they get home from school. **If the mother can handle it, home schooling is best.** There are several companies which provide excellent textbooks and teacher guides for home schooling.
- When a happening occurs, large or small, fun or sad, be there and listen, listen, listen. Listening helps keep them close.

III. Learn—Spend Quality Time With Them—Know Them

- Observe their attributes, their tendencies, what is normal and what is not (Psalm 51:5; I Peter 3:7).

17 / Parent - Child Relationships

- Know what they are saying by their body language and what they are saying when you are not around.
- Precede disincentives which are appropriate for their misbehavior with **a clear explanation of the offense.** Given the opportunity, Satan will take advantage of any confusion and turn the child's mind to self-righteousness and parent-condemnation (Proverbs 16:18; Hebrews 12:15). "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

- Do not push them to self-doubt. Distinguish between willful disobedience and an inability to perform due to immaturity. Youthful inability can usually be handled through a time of show-and-tell, and sometimes responsibilities should be less intensive.
- Administer discipline in love. Children will test their parents, but will usually submit with respect to this kind of discipline.

IV. Love—God Says We Are to Love Our Children (Titus 2:4)

Parents who fail to understand a child's perception of love demonstrated by parental guidelines fail miserably. Demonstrations of love such as the following are important for preventing a generation gap:

- A. As father and mother, show love toward one another.
- B. Provide a secure home; handle parental differences in private.
 - In God's order parents work as a team, with the father as the head of the home. Children are created to respond to this arrangement. The practice of this biblical concept is an emotional stabilizer, a benefit of obedience to God's chain of authority.

18 / Parent - Child Relationships

- C. Frequently tell your children you love them. Show your love often with a kiss, a hug, and a loving touch.
- D. Tell them that even though you love them, God loves them even more.
 - Tell them that you are not perfect, and, in the final analysis, we are all accountable to God. When you

realize you have made a mistake, apologize, but do not relinquish your duty to be the parent.

- To save children from themselves, from the world, and from Satan, hold firmly to boundaries for behavior and practice in an attitude of love! When a parent says “No!” it means no! God requires discipline, children need it, and they will thank you for it later (Hebrews 12:11).
- E. Know where they are at all times; this is a very important aspect of love.
- We have had years of adult experience. Children are without this, and God has called us to be their safety net. The at-home mother has a special advantage in monitoring her children’s activity (Proverbs 31:27-28).
 - Have their friends in your home where you can observe them firsthand. Children’s activities go forward with your advice and consent.
 - Someday, when they are a little older and chafing under your dating policy, they may say, “Dad, you don’t trust me!” The answer is, “I trust you, but I don’t trust your biology. I don’t even trust my own biology, so I also must exercise care about my activities.”
 - Have a definite time established for children to check in or return home. They may not admit it, but children understand this restriction as a demonstration of parental love.
- F. Respect their God-given individuality and their property.
- G. **Do not spoil them. Give them responsibilities and teach them to work in order to acquire things.**

H. Read to the children, beginning when they are very young. This activity creates in them the desire to learn to read.

I. Help by explaining the nature of peer pressure before it seeks to control them.

- Even in Christian circles, peer pressure bent on evil exists among children. It seeks to establish and enforce worldly standards for language, music, dress, and dating that are carnal and sensual.
- Establish and enforce reasonable standards (parameters) that clearly set the children apart from the world's relationships, dress, music, *et cetera*. When they realize they can stand alone, they become strong as individuals.

J. Make them feel wanted and important in the home.

- Treat them with respect. Bring them (with some counsel) into big decisions, such as purchasing a new car, choosing a vacation, *et cetera*.

K. Compliment their good actions.

- Teach by observing their talents, and support them with praise and the tools needed to promote their development.

V. Lead!

Teach them obedience to a reasonable set of standards for behavior. This is a most important by-product of genuine parental love. "A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Proverbs 29:15b).

- Do not condone a temper. Doing so strengthens their wicked nature and resolve to have control.
- Learning can not even begin until you have children under control. Get them under control when they are young, and discipline will be much less of a problem as they grow older (Proverbs 23-25).
- Do not gossip. They may not see their own mistakes, but they identify the evil of gossip which in turn leads to disrespect for the gossiping parent.

- If children are in trouble with the teacher, they should be in trouble with dad. If you do not trust the teacher, get them into a different school.
- Eliminate confusion—do not have too many rules. Clearly identify what is expected and be consistent. Parents should not tolerate the need to repeat a command again and again (Deuteronomy 6:7-9).
- If children do not learn at home under forthright parents, they will learn in later years under the cruel hand of the world.
- “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes” (Proverbs 13:24).
- When children deliberately disobey, do not show anger or fear; calmly accept the challenge and win—decisively.
- Disincentives, such as the removal of privileges, can be effective.
- Do not give up. Love hangs in there, and the child will eventually settle down.

VI. Dating Policy—A Must! [VERY IMPORTANT]

Dating is a serious matter with lifetime consequences. “A youth boiling with hormones will wonder why he should not give full freedom to his sexual desires. If he is unchecked by custom, morals or laws, he may ruin his life before he matures sufficiently to understand that sex is a river of fire that must be banked and cooled by a hundred restraints if it is not to consume in chaos both the individual and the group.” (From a summary of *The Lessons of History* by Will and Ariel Durant, printed in *The Readers Digest*, December 1968. *The Lessons of History* is a study of twenty civilizations throughout 4,000 years of history and was hailed by the historian Allan Nevins as “one of the outstanding works of American historiography.”)

“See then [parents and others] that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:15-16).

Although we should be concerned about the world’s children, this book is not about them. We are concerned here about the devastation among young people from Christian homes. We are losing them by the tens of thousands.

An anti-American, anti-Judeo-Christian, no-boundaries premise for curriculum has been forced upon many public schools. Tenure guarantees imposed by teachers' unions leave school administrators powerless to prevent moral pollution by a few secular humanist teachers. Joined by the leftist media, these teachers look upon moral authority with disrespect and insist that foul language, promiscuous sex, addictive drugs, and unwed mothers to be considered the norm.

- This insidious scourge upon our youth, our homes, the church, and God’s name can be stopped (I John 4:4; Isaiah 43:2).
- It is in the interest of all people who love America and liberty to support and promote God-honoring education. We have a duty to support one another and encourage Bible-based parent training. This includes lovingly helping unsettled families and single parents to be sure that their young people do not slip through the cracks.

Failure to enforce a family dating policy that assures an emotionally balanced dating sequence leaves the child very vulnerable to sexual sin.

- A well-thought-out dating policy gives parents an upper hand in the war with Satan and his hosts. It is up

22 / Parent - Child Relationships

to parents to determine what that policy will be and then to see to it that it is followed. Poor parent-image is manifested by the parents' reluctance to discipline and to enforce compliance with family policy.

- When the parents lose control, they lose respect. The child loses both confidence in the parents and the security that goes with it.
- The loss of just one precious young person to a weak marriage is a big loss to the family, the church, the community, and our nation. It is the peace and contentment of a happy marriage which frees energies and time for a fruitful life.

Sample Dating Policy

- A. Date Christians only—those who are spiritual, money-wise, and industrious. Learning to evaluate and to understand others is, of course, part of the getting-acquainted process.
- B. No dating those who display poor taste such as rebellious dress or hairstyle.
- C. No attendance or participation in worldly activities such as dances, movies, parked car dates, or petting. Love waits (I Thessalonians 4:5-6; Hebrews 13:4; II Timothy 2:22; I Corinthians 13:4).
- D. Parents should be trusted confidants. Where young friends can not always be trusted, mother and dad can.

During pre-dating and dating years, the policy of mother and dad should be to lovingly and respectfully seek out and listen to the joys and sorrows of their young person.

- E. Dating is an advice and consent process with parents (Romans 13:1; Colossians 3:20).
- F. The pace of dating should be such that steady dating will not be a consideration until after high school. The earliest age that even minimal courting will be permitted must be set (e.g., age 16).

23 / Parent - Child Relationships

Ideas for Dates

Church services	Projects
Church social functions	Bible studies
Athletic events	Topical research projects
Bowling, bicycling, <i>et cetera</i>	Dinner fellowships
Family games at home	Cooking at home
Selected plays, concerts	Visiting museums
Clean, wax car	Re-do furniture, <i>et cetera</i>
Ministries together	Planning functions

Failure to bring one's child to marriage as a virgin often brings public shame to the child, to the parents, and the father is accountable for this before God (I Samuel 3:13; Proverbs 19:26).

As God's undershepherds, parents have the authority to lovingly superintend their children as a demonstration of God's power for the good, for the family reputation, and to establish the child's

development for the future (Colossians 3:20a; Proverbs 29:15).