

God's Wisdom in Parenting: Christ

1. Cultivate a Desire for God in Children.

A. Display God's Glory and Instruct in God's way:

Lets look at the parable of the sower.

Luke 4:4-15

Vs 9 *"And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold." As he said these things, he called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."*

vs 10-11 *"¹⁰To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'¹¹ Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God."*

vs 15 *"As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience."*

Showing the Kingdom:

In this parable seeds represent the gospel of Gods Kingdom, which is simply **Gods rule** over individuals and communities. Although, the emphasis is on the soil. The good soil depicts the heart that is prepared to hear the truth of the gospel. This is our job as a community to cultivate the soil in our children. **The honest and good heart is referring to moral quality and integrity.** This is what the Proverbs communicate as God's way, his principles, how His Kingdom works.

Your life as a parable

The parable that Jesus told would bring about different responses in deferent people. In general parable harden hearts to his Gods truth or to elicit a response, asking for and explanation that provides an opportunity for acceptance of the message. **This is your life, you life is like a parable before your children,** that they might see the mysteries and they can be revealed to them.

Deut 6:4-9

⁴ "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you

rise. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

We want our children to see the **big picture of Gods kingdom** in our lives even if they don't recognize it. We are **not imparting specific knowledge but direct them to see God glory in his kingdom**. We do this in many ways. 1) We are directing the influences that come in their lives, especially as younger ages. 2) We are asking questions to them about their experiences and about sharing the questions we are asking about our experiences to draw out how God is at work. 3) We want to present to a compelling vision of who God is and how his Kingdom works so that they are drawn to it. You are living life with them, invite them into you life. **Basically discipleship 24-7.**

We see this in the life of Timothy as Paul explains in 2 Timothy 3:14-15 that "from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writing, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus"

Transition: displaying and cultivating might sound great but we must also come to grips with reality of the human heart. This is our reality check.

B. Reality check

Proverbs 4:23

*"Keep your heart with all vigilance,
for from it flow the springs of life."*

Responses reveals what's in the heart. We often think that we become a sinner when we sin but the bible teaches that we sin because we are a sinner. We are never morally neutral. **Your child is always worshipping**

Jeremiah 17:9

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?"

I just want to encourage you don't be afraid to tell them how **dangerous sin is and the results of sin or as the Bible would say the wages of sin**. Anyone who comes to trust in Christ must first understand his and **desperate need**. We can't follow in Gods ways or see our need for him **on our own**. Our hearts are sinful and foolish including those of our children

Proverbs 22: 15

“Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him”

In Proverbs the child represents someone in need of **instruction or discipline** and is that not each one of us. We sometimes spend so much time and energy trying to discern **why we sinned**, and that is necessary in its own time, but if you are like me sometime it’s hard for me to know why I act foolishly and sin, let alone someone else or a child. And if you have been around children long enough you know what I am talking about. (Example: Mom and dad are currently making food for them but it sometimes is so hard for them to not demand it now and complain. Do they not trust us?) You don’t have to teach them what is wrong. **Foolishness and sinfulness are in their hearts, and they act accordingly.** The loving discipline that we enact is to drive that foolishness out so that they will see and live in the wisdom of God.

Transition: We must come to grips with reality about our hearts and the hearts of our children in order for us to accept and **appreciate the good news** of what God has done. We have the privilege to be ministers of the Gospel to your children. Serve them with the Gospel.

C. Be a minister of the Gospel.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

*¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, **God making his appeal through us.** We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

This passage moves us beyond just cultivating the soil but to **dropping the seeds** of the gospel. You are on **God’s mission as a minister of reconciliation. You are an ambassador sent by God to children.** We are to be faithful to cultivate the soil and plant the seed but only God can bring the growth. We must not be passive in this but cry out to our God to pour his spirit out to draw our children to him.

Danger:

The danger is when we don’t see ourselves as God’s agents we will become **lazy** or we **lay down our law**. Being lazy is not moving toward our children to hold out a rescue unless it irritates us enough or they are and inconvenience to us. Laying

down the law look like creating unnecessary rules to show our authority. Neither is appropriate biblical discipline but is punishment.

The core of the problem is **not between you and your child but between God and your child**. You are only acting as God's ambassador. It is God who is not being obeyed when your children are disobedient. It is God who is not being honored when you are not honored.

As we are administering this reconciliation we must remember that we **are not ultimately providing punishment but correction** as we hold out the gospel for them to trust. Our ultimate goal in this process is to be faithful minister of God to our children doing whatever we can to **target their hearts**. As we serve children we have a million opportunities to go to the heart and give them the gospel. In fact missing the heart misses the gospel. Missing the Gospel missing the opportunity you have to show Gods supreme glory. We must not only expose the idols of the heart but also enthrone God. We want them to be captivated by the greatness and glory of God. To **show them there sin and Christ** rescue for them is showing them the most glorious expression of God.

We cannot control their responses in general or to the gospel message. In fact none of the passages about this ministry have the goal of **making a decisions for Christ**. We are making disciples that grow in there worship of God. Whether they are saved or not, your goal is to be faithful to orient them to God. Just a change in behavior is condemnable; remember Jesus' interaction with the Pharisees.

Proverbs 22:6

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

Train up a child in the way he should go: We are to dedicate or initiate our children in God's way. We are to love, teach and discipline, basically using every opportunity we can imagine to show them the wisdom of God and his ways. That is to show them and teach them what pleases or displeases our God and normal results of this type of living.

Depart: We must be careful with this verse because it is misunderstood and misused O' so often resulting in a false hope and lame promise. It goes like this "I took my child to church, therefore I did my part and God promised me that they will be Christian" or in its softer tone "I did everything imaginable to communicate the gospel to them so they should be Christian". The problem is that if we read proverbs correctly we will find that proverbs are not promises but wise sayings. This misinterpretation has 2 grave issues. 1) False hope: One being that the Gospel of Jesus Christ does not work like a math equation such as $1 + 1 = 2$. You bring nothing

to the table to bargain with God, but your sin, God does not owe you. 2) Lame promise: This misinterpretation does not promise enough because the weight of the promise rests on you as the parent to “Train up the child.” How are we, flawed and sinful, supposed to train up a child? We might be wondering if we did enough or too much, if we said enough or we said too much.

What does God expect: Faithfulness and trust in Him.

Transition: This mission to cultivate a desire for God in children is not one that parents are responsible to do on your own. We as a community are to undertake ministry. Which leads us to **invite children to share in Gods glory in Community.**

2. Invite children to share in God’s Glory:

A. We need community

Ephesians 3:10-11

¹⁰through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord,

Cultivating process is done together. We are presenting our entire lives to the children so they can see a tangible expression of what the Kingdom of God looks like. Who has a better view than your kids.

Transition: not only are we to do this in community but also our children are part of this community. Or in other words children are you neighbors.

B. Children are neighbors

Mark 12:30-31

³⁰And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ ³¹The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Children are not **second-class citizens** in this community. You might think that goes without saying. This goes beyond the physical bodies but to the core of there being made in God image. Yes they are **growing** physically, mentally and spiritually but there worth does not change as they change. This should effect the way we discipline them, speak to them, speak about the to others. They are not extensions of you there own person made in his image. **There success is not for your pride and their failures are not for you despair.** This makes us come to grips with the way we treat the people close to us that we would never treat a friend or coworker.

Recognizing children as neighbors frees us to enjoy them as people rather than to resent them as laundry-generating, food-ingesting, mess-making, fit-throwing financial obligations.”

So yes, we are to work hard to cultivate a desire for God in them but we must not forget that they are people to be **treasured by us because God treasures them and has treasured us**. This should remove any shame, condemnation, or contempt in our attitudes and interaction with them. This creates an environment of love and value even when we have to correct them. **Instead of crying out to God to fix children we will cry out to God for help to love the neighbors God has placed in our community**

This is an encouragement because when we see our children as neighbors, and members of our community we have plentiful scripture to instruct us. We don't need to look for **specific passages** that tell us about children but apply any passage that instructs us how to interact with people.

We must ask God to show us how he sees them. We are prone to think too highly of them and forget they are sinners and to think too lowly of them and

3. Display the Joy of God's Glory to Children

Love Jesus and have fun

Psalm 16:11

¹¹ You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

God is the happiest being in the entire universe. Through Christ he has invited us into his presence to find joy in him.

They will get excited about what you will get excited about.

Example: football and Easter. “Do you have any tombs?”

Celebrate and progress as a testimony of God working in your child. It's a evidence of God grace.

4. Depend on God's Grace dying to Self

Philippians 2:1-8

*“So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² **complete my joy** by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of **one mind**. ³ Do nothing from selfish*

*ambition or conceit, but in humility count **others more significant than yourselves.***
⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.
*⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but **emptied himself**, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.*
*⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming **obedient** to the point of death, even death on a cross.”*

These verses have many elements of what we have talked about already, Joy, community, but we must also follow in our savior footsteps and die to self. If we are going to be ministers of reconciliation we have to be ready to die daily to our desires and our comfort.

We, being our children or adults, cannot be obedient on our own. We must trust in the one who was always obedient even to the point of death on a cross. God is not asking for perfection but that we are increasing in our faithfulness. He is asking for increasing surrender to him. This will take long night and early morning; this will take giving up the relaxing time at the dinner table for a free for all.

For Christ this involved giving up the eternal glories of the presence of God in heaven as Christ died on a rugged cross outside Jerusalem. Through his sacrifice Christ not only wants to save us but to impart to us his very life and this is the life we hold out to our children as we give up our lives. God has been cultivating your soil to bring to the place you are today, continue to surrender to him and then give up your life.