

Transformational Parenting

Seeing Your Child Change from Sinner, to Saved, to Servant

Introduction:

1. If you are going to be successful at anything in life, you must first visualize your end goal, and then choose your action steps in light of that goal.
 - a. If you are building a house, you begin with the end in mind (the blueprint) and then work backwards from there to decide each step that needs to take place to build the home.
 - b. It's the same way with building an airplane, a car, or even a Lego man!
2. The principle is very simple: If you do not know what you are trying to build, then your efforts are likely in vain. Children are no different. If you don't know what kind of child you are trying to build, it is very unlikely that the result will be one that you will like
3. Looking back, I can see that my parents loved me enough and had enough vision for my life to do everything they could to try to transform my life, step by step, into the image of Christ.
4. I would like to give you the child's perspective on what parenting practices are the most important to seeing kids transform over their lives from sinners, to saved, and finally to servants.

Parenting Practice #1 — Establish that God is #1

*“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” **Revelation 4:11***

1. For as long as I can remember, my parents drilled into me that God is more important than anything and everything else in the world, and pleasing Him is the #1 goal of life.
2. The person at the very top of a business's “chain of command” is the ultimate authority, the one that everyone else ultimately answers to.
3. If someone was to draw a “chain of command” for your family, who or what would be on top?
4. Growing up, I was taught that God was on top, ruling over every other area of our lives...trumping all other areas so to speak.
5. However, I was not just told this verbally. This “God on top” lifestyle was modeled to me all the time, and in a variety of ways, before it really began sink in.
6. Let me share with you a few different areas that I think are crucial for parents to show their children that God holds priority over.
 - a. **Entertainment**
 - i. I put entertainment first on this list because I honestly believe that this is the area that we struggle with the most as Christians.
 - ii. Satan realizes the weakness that we all have in this area, and has staged an all out attack on biblical principles and moral absolutes through every media outlet possible— TV, movies, music, computers, video games, etc.
 - iii. Whether we realize it or not, Satan is the ruler of this world. He has a firm grasp on our entertainment industry, and you can rest assured that his purpose for entertainment is not to draw your child closer to the Lord.

- iv. So many parents drag their children to church on Sundays and Wednesdays so that they may learn biblical values, but then allow TV shows, movies, and music to enter the home that completely contradict those values.
- v. Satan’s purpose for entertainment is to dull your child’s conscience. Satan’s goal is to eliminate the colors “black” and “white” and replace them with the color “gray.”
- vi. Growing up, I could not understand why my parents would not allow me to watch the vast majority of current TV shows and movies. At times, I felt very frustrated by my family’s “weirdness.”
- vii. But looking back today, I am so thankful that they were “weird” in this area. They were making a statement — if God is #1, He is #1 of all, including entertainment. Your child may not always like you for taking this stand, but I can promise you that they will respect you for it.

b. Relationships

- i. Growing up, my parents made it very clear to me that the most important relationship in my life was my relationship with God. Kids need to have this driven into their heads. They must understand that no other relationship takes precedence.
- ii. If a friend at school did not want to follow God, then the friend would have to go. Period. I did not live to please my friends. I lived to please God.
- iii. Friendships are very important to kids, and will become even more important as they grow older. However, children must understand that God is their very best Friend, and He is the one that must be pleased above all others.

c. Finances

- i. My parents always stressed to me that God doesn’t own 10% of what we have, He owns all of it! And my dad’s favorite saying that he would share with me about finances as I grew up was, “The more money you have, then the more you have to give.”
- ii. Kids need to see that God rules your finances instead of your finances ruling you.

7. One more point to consider— if you really do want God to be #1 in your children’s lives, then you are going to need to **praise** them when you see behavior that seems to indicate that they are growing towards this goal.
 - a. It always amazes me that parents have no problem praising a child for getting straight A’s or for making the game-winning basket in the basketball game, but have such a hard time praising them for doing their devotions.
 - b. Kids, from the very beginning, need to be praised for doing anything that pertains to loving God or wanting to know Him more.
 - c. Kids learn what’s important to their parents by what their parents pay attention to.

Parenting Practice #2— Be the Same All the Time

“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath...” Ephesians 6:4a

1. So many Christian children and teenagers get turned off to God and church because their parents act one way at church and a different way at home.

2. This is especially true of pastor's kids. For many a PK, the journey towards rebellion begins with a frustration at seeing his or her dad say one thing from the pulpit and live a different way at home.
3. I can honestly say that my dad never acted this way. I never perceived a double standard. I think this was biggest reason why I didn't develop a negative attitude towards church.
4. Kids smell hypocrisy a mile away! They will notice it many times even before you do. Whenever you realize that you have been living hypocritically, don't sweep it under the rug. Apologize for it! This may have been the single, most powerful thing that my parents regularly did.
 - a. Always remember that kids don't expect perfect parents. They just want honest parents.
 - b. Making mistakes won't ruin your children, but covering the mistakes up and trying to justify them very well might.

Parenting Practice #3— Balance Love and Discipline

"...But bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." **Ephesians 6:4b**

1. This final point is so important. As Children's Ministry Director here at CrossRoads, I see so many children who are not thriving spiritually because their parents lean too far in either direction. If either of these two essentials is missing in a parent/child relationship, the result is disastrous.
 - a. Children who receive love and no discipline become spoiled brats.
 - b. Children who receive discipline and no love become bitter rebels.
2. Growing up, I never had to doubt my parents love for me. It was just a normal, daily part of life for my parents to hug me, kiss me, tell me they love me, and spend quality time with me.
3. This is always the starting point to a healthy parent/child relationship. If kids don't know that Mom and Dad love them, they are not going to respond well to discipline at all.
4. Yet, while love is essential for a child to experience healthy emotional development, love without discipline is also harmful.
5. Here are few discipline tips that I can share with you that impacted me growing up:
 - a. **Establish clear boundaries.** (Children must have no doubts what the boundaries are.)
 - b. **Discipline consistently when boundaries are broken.** (Don't ever allow boundary-breaking to go unpunished.)
 - c. **Explain reason for discipline.** (Make your children confess sinful behavior. Help them to understand the "root" sin that may be behind the behavior.)
 - d. **Discipline in love, not in anger.**
 - e. **After discipline has been administered, don't revisit the sin.** (The case is closed. The book is shut.)
6. The bottom line is this: If you strive each and every day to balance a healthy dose of love with a healthy dose of discipline in children or teenagers' lives, you have the best chance to see true spiritual change happen in their lives.

Conclusion:

1. Today, we have looked at three parenting practices that will help you to see true spiritual transformation happen in your child's life.

2. As proof for how I know that these parenting practice's really work, I can only say that they were incredibly powerful in my own life.
 - a. Even before I trusted Christ as my Savior at the age of 7, I knew that God was the most important thing in life, because my parents constantly emphasized that he was #1 in our family's life.
 - b. Once I had trusted Christ as my Savior, I consistently saw what it meant to be a Christian. I was never confused by seeing one type of "Christianity" at church, and another at home. This consistency kept me from doubting whether Christianity was "real" or not as I entered my teenage years.
 - c. Finally, the balance of love and discipline that I received throughout my entire childhood helped shape me into the person that I am today.
3. I believe with all my heart that I have the passion for serving God largely because of the parents that I was blessed with. They truly were transformational influences in my life.
4. My greatest hope is that each of you will make a decision to be transformational parents in the lives of your children as well.