

The Heart of Parenting

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Session 1

The Heart of Parenting: The Father's Heart

I. Introduction: “Imitation is the Sincerest Form of ...?”

“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”—Ephesians 5:1

II. The Biblical Revelation of God as “Father”

A. God as Father in the Old Testament

B. God as Father in the Synoptic Gospels

C. God as Father in the Gospel of John

“But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God...”—John 1:12

“No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the **Father's** side, ***he has made him known.***”—John 1:18

“I and the **Father** are one...”—John 10:30

“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the **Father** except through me....whoever has seen me, has seen the **Father.**”—John 14:6,9

“In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the **Father** on your behalf for the **Father** himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.”—John 16:26-27

“Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the **Father**; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my **Father** and your **Father**, to my God and your God.’”—John 20:17

D. God as Father in the Epistles

“To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our **Father** and the Lord Jesus Christ.”—Romans 1:7

“Grace to you and peace, from God our **Father** and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...”—Ephesians 1:2-3

“Blessed be the God and **Father** of our Lord Jesus Christ...”—I Peter 1:3

“See what kind of love the **Father** has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.”—I John 3:1

“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! **Father!**”—Romans 8:15

III. The Imitation of God—Ephesians 5:1-2

“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”—Ephesians 5:1

- A. “Beloved Children of God” is our most significant and eternal identity
- B. Living “a life of love” is the way we imitate our Father
- C. Husbands and wives imitate and reflect the relationship of Jesus and His Bride
- D. “Masters” imitate and reflect the servanthood of their Master

Parents imitate and reflect the Father's love for the Son

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”—Ephesians 6:4

1. In His steadfast love, sacrifice and patience
2. In His loving discipline and instruction

IV. The Heart of Parenting is Found as the Heart of God is Revealed

- A. Studying the Father and the Son who came to make Him known
- B. Praying for greater revelation of the Father's heart—Eph 1:15-17
- C. Praying for the power to love as He loves—Eph 3:14-19

Session 2

The Heart of Parenting: The Father's Victory

I. Introduction—The Battle for the Heart

- A. Ephesians 2:1-2...the demonic allegiance of unbelievers
- B. Proverbs 22:15...foolishness bound up in a child's heart
- C. Jeremiah 17:9...heart is deceitful and desperately sick...
- D. Romans 3:9-20...None is righteous
- E. Galatians 3:23-4:11...slaves to sin and "elementary principles of the world"
- F. Romans 7:13-25...law of sin vs. law of life...who will rescue me?
- G. Romans 8:1-17...reconciliation and salvation: the Gospel
- H. Galatians 5:16-26...desires of the flesh vs. the desires of the Spirit
- I. Ephesians 6:10-20...the nature of the enemy
- J. II Timothy 2:1-7; 4:6-8; I John 2:12-14...acknowledging the on-going warfare

II. The Heart of the Parent

- A. Testimonies
- B. Paul's Battles—Romans 7; I Corinthians 9; Philippians 3; II Timothy 4:6-8
- C. Embracing a war-time, "allied" mentality

III. The Heart of the Child

- A. Unregenerate Child—at war with God, a slave to sin
- B. Regenerate Child—at war with the world, the flesh and the devil
- C. Assurance of Salvation—discerning the condition of the heart

IV. The Passionate Parenting Principles of Apostle Paul: Colossians 1:28-29

- A. Prayer
- B. Proclamation
- C. Pedagogy
- D. Perspiration
- E. Perfection

V. The Father's Victory

- A. His Power at work within
- B. Our Partnership with Him—the “Easy Yoke and Light Burden”
- C. Growing weary in doing good...

Session 3

The Heart of Parenting: The Father's Strength Men's Breakout

Be strong in the Lord and in His Mighty Power (Ephesians 6)

What does this look like...how does it relate to us as Fathers/Teachers/children and imitators of God?

Eph 6:10-20 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

- I. Be strong *in the Lord and in His mighty power*.
- II. Recognize the true enemy and be aware of his schemes
- III. "Take up" the armor that God provides

IV. The paradox of Christian Manhood. In our weakness, He is strong.

- A. Humility—“strong in the Lord” “under God’s mighty hand...”
- B. Effort—“stand firm” “wrestle” “make every effort to add to your faith...”
- C. Vigilance—“Keep alert with all perseverance.” “Guard your heart with all diligence.” “Be very careful how you live...”
- D. Prayer—“Keep on praying...in the Spirit, at all times, with all prayer and supplication.”
- E. Mission-focus—“to boldly proclaim the mystery of the Gospel.”

Session 3

The Heart of Parenting: The Heart of Mothering Women's Breakout

I. Introduction

A. My GOSPEL IS SUFFICIENT to rescue you from all of your sin.

1. *Romans 7:15-25a*

B. My GRACE IS SUFFICIENT for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.

2. *2 Corinthians 12:9-10*

II. Nurturing My Teen – An opportunity to “despair of nothing.”

A. Luke 6:27-36

B. Practicals

1. Consistent and intentional discipleship
2. Preparing their minds for action (I Peter 1:13)
3. Prescriptive scripture memorization
4. Practicing sweet speech
5. Finding common ground

III. Humbling Myself With My Teen – An opportunity to choose the lower place.

A. Philippians 2:3-4

B. Practicals

1. Clearly and specifically naming my sin and asking my teen for his forgiveness
2. Asking for my teen's perspective and prayer
3. Asking for my teen's honest input
4. Resisting judgment and really listening

V. Praying For My Teen – An opportunity to walk in learned helplessness and learned desperation.

A. Philippians 4:5-7

B. *A Praying Life* by Paul Miller

C. Practicals

1. Prayer lists and prayer cards

2. Praying all the time

3. Faith pictures

4. Personal retreats

5. Praying the scriptures

6. Praying for my young adult

7. Praying in the moment

VI. Encouraging My Teen – An opportunity to imitate Paul and “give courage” to my teenager.

A. Giving courage by drawing my child’s attention to the ways God is at work in his life.

1. Encouragement journals

2. Noticing the small things and encouraging in the moment

3. Commending my children to their dad

4. Commending my children to others

5. Showing respect for my child

6. “Just because” tokens of affection

Quotes from *A Praying Life*
by Paul Miller

1. “Until we become convinced we can’t change our child’s heart, we will not take prayer seriously.”
2. “...power in prayer comes from being in touch with your weakness. To teach us how to pray, Jesus told stories of weak people who knew they couldn’t do life on their own. The persistent widow and the friend at midnight get access, not because they are strong but because they are desperate. Learned desperation is at the heart of a praying life.”
3. “An interviewer once asked Edith Schaeffer, author and wife of evangelist and philosopher Francis Schaeffer, ‘Who is the greatest Christian woman alive today?’ She replied, ‘We don’t know her name. She is dying of cancer somewhere in a hospital in India.’ I’m talking about that woman. Underneath her obedient life is a sense of helplessness. It has become part of her very nature...almost like breathing. Why? Because she is weak. She can feel her restless heart, her tendency to compare herself with others. She is shocked at how jealousy can well up in her. She notices how easily the world gets its hooks into her. In short, she distrusts herself. When she looks at other people, she sees the same struggles. The world, the flesh, and the Devil are too much for her. The result? Her heart cries out to God in prayer. She needs Jesus.”
4. “God wants us to come to him empty-handed, weary, and heavy-laden.”
5. “Prayer is bringing your helplessness to Jesus.”
6. “Learned helplessness lurks just beneath the surface of ...[my] prayer time. I simply can’t do life on my own. Without God’s intervention, I am completely helpless. I need Jesus.”
7. “As we mature as Christians, we see more and more of our sinful natures, but at the same time we see more and more of Jesus. As we see our weaknesses more clearly, we begin to grasp our need for more grace.”
8. “It didn’t take me long to realize I did my best parenting by prayer.”
9. “I began to speak less to the kids and more to God.”

Session 4

The Heart of Parenting: The Father's Task

I. Introduction

A. The Father's (and Mother's) Task—discipline and instruction

1. Deuteronomy 6:1-9
2. Ephesians 6:1-4
3. Proverbs
4. Hebrews 12

B. A Teaching Story

II. The Passionate Parenting Principles of the Apostle Paul

A. Prayer, Perspiration, Perfection and Power

B. Proclamation

C. Pedagogy

1. Warning—everyone
2. Teaching—everyone
3. With All Wisdom
4. Mature, Complete, Perfect—*in Christ*

Principles to Practices—Seeking to let the Word shape our work

- D. Loving the Law
- E. Lawful use of the Law
- F. Same side of the table
- G. Only what the Father is doing
- H. Ready for the next step
- I. Iron sharpens iron
- J. Preparing the mind for action
- K. Practice righteousness

1. “Put off; put on; be made new!” Ephesians 4:22-24

III. Perfect *In Christ*. Rejoicing that our names are written in His book.

Session 5

The Heart of Parenting: The Father's Joy

I. The Prodigal God and His Two Sons

- A. The Scandal
- B. The Sons
- C. The Father
- D. The Gospel— The impossibly lavish love of the Father

“No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.”—John 1:18

“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”—Ephesians 5:1-2

“The heart of parenting is found as the heart of God is revealed...”

How can we imitate the impossibly lavish love of God in our parenting?

II. Attending. Studying. Knowing ...Ps 139.

III. Incarnating...entering their world...really!!! Heb 2:14-3:6

- A. Imitate this One...
- B. who sent the Son to be a faithful High Priest;
- C. who left His throne to enter our world;
- D. who sacrificed Himself to bring about our redemption, reconciliation and adoption.
- E. Imitate Him. As a beloved child of God, live the Gospel!

IV. Delighting—an inner work of the Spirit with clear outworking

- A. “For the joy set before Him...” Hebrews 12:2
- B. “Here I am, and the children you have given me...!” Hebrews 2:13
- C. “That my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full...” John 15:11
- D. “Rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and full of glory...” I Peter 1:8
- E. “See what kind of love...!!!” I John 3:1
- F. “Rejoice over you with singing...” Zephaniah 3:14-20.

V. Rejoicing ***together*** as beloved children of God!!

- A. Fellowshiping together: Sharing evidences of Grace...watch God work and talk about what you see.
- B. Serving together: imitating the One who came not to be served, but to serve
- C. Worshiping together: Reminding one another that your most significant identity is as a beloved child of God through the power of the Gospel.