

Victory of the Lamb – January 13, 2019 – Living Forward

Deuteronomy 11:16-21 Teaching Moments and Places

Does anyone know the perfect parent? I did. I knew the perfect parent. The perfect parent was me before I had kids. And then I had kids and all that went right out the window. What is the best parenting advice you have ever heard or given? Jacky son was born on our intern year the pastor told me, Don't worry Bill. He will grow up inspite of you. That was the best and truest advice I was given. Did your parents have a go to line or a favorite line to use on you. My favorite parenting line, I only used it a time or two but it was good: I would tell Jacky's kids, "You are going to take a bath. The only question is whether you are going to take it with a white butt or a red butt." For the record, it always ended up with a white one.

How would you describe your parenting style? Free range, hands off, hands on, helicopter, push over, dictator, reasonable. One author has identified over 50 parenting styles in America today. Better question and it fits for us all whether we are a parent or not – what are the values inside your home? When Darcy Drake would come baby sit our kids she would bring a bag full of supplies, games, coloring sheets, toys. She wasn't just going to watch tv and keep her eye on our children she was going to have experiences with out kids. I was and still am humbled. She had it right. I have a big L on my forehead. In our homes today values are taught that is caught by the screen. Across our land we gather around the screen and effectively say, "Entertain me, teach me, guide me." The average teenager spends just shy of nine hours a day in front of a screen. For middle schoolers the average is 6 hours. The problem isn't so much the screen, the problem is what values are taught on the screen. The values that are displayed on the screen are repeated at such a rate that a local church could never counter them no matter how numerous or effective our ministries. That values are being taught on the screen is nothing new: There was Mr. Rogers, CaptainKangaroo, Sesame Street, Barnie, and know youtubers. What is your child's, niece, nephew, grandchild, neighbor's favorite youtuber? Because they are learning a whole lot. PewDiePie 79.5 million subscribers.

One of the biggest problems with screen time is it is taking away from parenting. Our own personal interaction with our kids. Conversation develops relationship. The more you talk the more you get to know a person, the more you know a person the more you open up to each other. Often one topic leads to another, one hurt leads to another, one joy to another joy. Our families need to use more time to converse, especially about the most important person in the world, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Teach kid to count is fine, but teaching them what counts is best. (Bob Talbert)

And into this setting we hear God speak: **Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them. . .** ¹⁸ **Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.** ¹⁹ **Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.** ²⁰ **Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates,** ²¹ **so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.** For this to happen we need to: 1. Let our hearts be filled with the word of God. 2. Let our eyes be fixed upon the word of God, having constant regard to it as the guide of our way, as the rule of our work, Ps 119:30 **I have chosen the way of faithfulness; I have set my heart on your laws.** 3. Let our tongues be employed about the word of God. God and his word are not to be an after thought they are to be something you can hang your life on. If we don't teach our

kids to follow Christ, the world will teach them not to. Children are great imitators, give them something/someone (Jesus) great to imitate. More is caught than taught.

Parental pressure is beyond intense today. It starts young when there is pressure to learn “6” instruments, “4” languages, and play “12” sports. Not to mention get an A+ in every class ever since Pre-K. In the opinion of one high school teacher this all blows up and the students crack under pressure about the time they are sophomores or juniors. That’s when they have additional freedoms of driving so easier access to temptations. That’s the time when AP classes are available and when the reality of GPA and AP scores come to play along with thousands of dollars of scholarship monies which could be slipping through their hands. And so many of us repeat what our parents said, “I got through it, so they can too.” Failing to remember that was not helpful at the time. And in the day of 24 hour commentary the stress possibilities are much higher.

Parental pressure is beyond intense today. We are so afraid we are going to crush our kids spirit that many of us have trouble saying “no,” and making it stick. So many of us think if we say “no” that our kids are going to have the worse life ever. And in fact, they may say that but that is based on emotion and not truth, entitlement and not emancipation. A few years ago, one of our campus ministries workers in Milwaukee was held up at gun point one evening about 7:30 at the back door of his home. Luckily, he was uninjured physically and held up quite well emotionally as well. The police surrounded the area like a tight drag net and before long they had caught the offender. The offender was a boy of about 16. His mom was distraught. She lamented, “I gave him everything he ever wanted. I don’t know why he did this.” I do. Do you? Since he received everything he wanted, he assumed he should have everything he wanted no matter what that meant.

Now it is important that we understand the difference between punishment and discipline. There is a difference between punishment and discipline. Punishment is on the past. The motivation is my anger. To train our children we must understand. No two kids are alike. The result of punishment is always, fear, guilt and more anger. Discipline is teaching and the focus is on the future. And the motivation is love. And the result is security because I know there are parameters and boundaries in life And we must be willing to focus them on the future in love so that they may have security.

The basic message today is don’t compartmentalize God, especially just to a day and an hour. Learn how to talk about and grow with God’s Word at the kitchen table, in the car, at the park, at the movies, before, during and after the game, the concert, talk about screen time what they saw, what it meant to them, what would God say. These are teachable moments and teachable places. God’s word not around but abound not just for us but for our kids as well. Use your kids VK materials, LES kids the lessons that come, Confirmation parents review what is going on in class, help them study for their tests and quizzes, for Quest parents same thing. Interact with them over the lessons. It is ok to learn from them. You have learned from a young kid. I have.

This is a law text. It is easy to feel guilty when we look at our fix it jobs. Our word usage has left us cursed more than blessed. IT would be easy to walk away and say I’m a failure and now my kids are messed up because of me. Our kids will grow up in spite of us because God hasn’t failed us or our kids. But I want you to remember who gave you and me these words of Deuteronomy 11. God. God gave us these words knowing we would fail not because he is mean but because he is all knowing. Knowing that we would fail, it is his desire that we would run to him to find comfort and strength not in what we

do/have done but in who He is, has done and will . God promise of salvation is not by our parenting skill but by grace through faith in Jesus. There is no stipulation to that fix. It's been done. And it is finished.

If I may summarize about all the parenting struggles, kids struggles and struggles period no matter who we are the greatest need for us all is to have a rich understanding of our identity in Christ, an identity that God gave us in our baptism. Galatians 3:26-27 - **So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.**

Does anyone know a perfect parent? I do. Our heavenly Father is the perfect parent even after he had kids. Even after we have failed and haven't fixed. We are still his kids. And he picks down and welcomes into his hands not just with our skinned knees and bruises but with crushed spirits and our broken souls. All of us whether we are parents or kids or grown up kids need not just a God sized hug, we need God to hug. Isaiah 40:11 **He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young** and Zephaniah 3:17 **The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you but will rejoice over you with singing.**

Pray thought let me hear you sing God, let me hear you rejoice over me, lift me up with your love and lead me to praise and pray and fix you and your words on my heart.