

Parenting God's Way: Cultivating Character or Controlling Chaos?

In a chaotic and confusing world, let's get grounded by looking to Scripture. Raising responsible kids is no microwave magic; it takes consistent time and energy. The results are often not instantaneous—diligence and perseverance will be your greatest assets, but the rewards far outweigh the challenges.

1. "Look, children are a gift of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is a reward" (Ps. 127:3). Children are a gift from the Lord in a society that often places a low value on them, to the point of aborting the inconvenience. The key is to focus on the blessings, not the difficulties; on the rewards and joys, not the disappointments and sorrows.

2. "And that since childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through the faith that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15). A major responsibility of parents is to make children familiar with the Scriptures and how to apply them to their daily lives. Church should be supplemental in regard to educating our children about God. The best place is the home.

Pick one topic for the week, such as God's sovereignty or His love and teach on it in deed and action. When financial difficulties come, let your children see you praying and seeking God rather than yelling at everyone. Remember, character is taught and caught. Don't throw Scriptures at them—the approach that uses the Bible like a machine gun will not work, but a broken and contrite heart that uses Scripture when the Holy Spirit prompts, will work—let them see the Scriptures in you.

3. "Therefore, take no thought about tomorrow, for tomorrow will take thought about the things of itself" (Matt. 6:34a). When we allow our minds to dwell on difficulty and trouble, it will affect our children at a very deep level. Proverbs 12:25 (NKJV) reminds us that, "Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, But a good word makes it glad." Do your words and actions build your children or harm them? Do you encourage or discourage?

I came across an article, "Simplifying Childhood May Protect Against Mental Health Issues," from the website "Raised Good-Parenting by Nature." The article describes what I've been sensing for years.

Here are a few key points that stood out: "Early in his career, Kim Payne volunteered in refugee camps where children were dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder. He describes them as, 'jumpy, nervous, and hyper-vigilant, wary of anything novel or new.' Years later, Payne ran a private practice in England, where he recognized many affluent English children were displaying the same behavioral tendencies as the children living in war zones half a world away. Why would these children living perfectly safe lives show similar symptoms?"

"Payne explains that although they were physically safe, mentally they were also living in a war zone of sorts, "Privy to their parents' fears, drives, ambitions and the very fast pace of their lives, the children were busy trying to construct their own boundaries..."

"Too much stuff, too many choices, too much information and too much speed-soccer. Music. Martial arts. Gymnastics. Ballet. Baseball. We schedule play dates with precision. And we fill every space in their rooms with educational books, devices and toys. The average Western child has in excess of 150 so much stuff, children become blinded and overwhelmed with choice." We are seeing an epidemic of hurried child syndrome as they not only try to keep up with our schedules,

but manage their own.

If we add our stress, worry, and fear to their lives, they can barely cope! Parents, do not always vent your fears and frustrations. There should be a sense of calm and safety in your home. Throw into the mix unhealthy food choices, as well as caffeine and stimulants, and it becomes clear that we are raising anxious, fearful, stressed-out kids. It's OK to say no; slow down and disengage from the media and electronics often. Instead, look to things that calm the home: God's Word, worship, fellowship, fun activities and so on. But be prepared; it will be a battle.

Why are families overburdened? One reason is that we think staying busy will help us avoid facing reality. Much like an alcoholic who escapes the temporary pain, but returns to it the following day. Another reason is that we are amped up. We take powder, pills and drinks to stay wired, to keep us busy. But there is a cost: anxiety, stress and fear eventually lead to nervous breakdowns.

We also stay busy because busyness means we are successful, or so it's said. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Success involves stability, balance and control. Yes, it will be hard, but any battle worth fighting is worth fighting for.

To view the sermon this article is based on, [click here](#).