

Rejoicing in Restraints, part 9: The Family

Assorted

(preached Pine Grove 10/11/20 Sun PM)

Introduction

Just to get a feel for the world's view of parenting, I got on the internet and simply typed in parent problems of today.

The first article to pop up was entitled "We're Raising Our Daughter Gender-Neutral, but She Only Wants Pink Dresses."

So I clicked on it.

The article began with a question that two parents were asking a parenting expert.

Here was the question.

My husband and I have a frequent disagreement on our 3-year-old and her love for dresses and all things pink! For the first two years of her life, she was constantly mistaken for a boy because she wore gender-neutral clothes. We direct her towards books and other media that do not represent traditional gender roles (no sparkle princesses!). We ask friends and family to refrain from commenting on her appearance and clothing, if they can help it, and to instead focus on skills or

interests. However, our daughter adores the color pink, insists on wearing dresses, and is currently obsessed with accessories. I am fine with this, though I hope it will be a phase. After a few battles about wearing her sole pink dress when it was dirty, my daughter and I did some online shopping together and she chose a few more dresses to order (all of them were pink, obviously). My husband is unhappy that I encouraged her obsession by purchasing the dresses and letting her wear some of my old jewelry. He gets annoyed when dresses get tangled while climbing a rock or running and says that dresses and accessories aren't suitable for doing most things. I appreciate his commitment to raising our daughter without gender stereotypes, but I also want to encourage her to make her own choices. I feel like if we push back too hard on her love for dresses and jewelry, it will backfire, and she will only become more obsessed! Help!

You may think I picked an article that is not the norm, but I assure you this is the current state of parenting today.

Parents who live not to offend their children, not to affirm their children's gender, and parents who are hopelessly lost in a unbelieving culture.

They don't need parenting help, they need the gospel.

But this is where modern parenting is.

Kids sit at the center of the family and make decisions for everyone.

What should we eat?

Should we go here or there?

How about this one?

Sweetie, you want to go to church today or not?

Literally, parenting today is not parenting at all.

It is weak fathers and mothers letting kids rule the house, and the outcome is a generation of kids who have no interest in being told what to do.

I mean, if you are afraid to tell a kid that they are a boy or a girl, how will you ever tell that that are hopelessly sinful and will never see heaven apart from faith in Christ.

But this again is modern parenting, and the results of it can be seen in the burning buildings and looted stores in the streets of America.

But before you think that is the only outcome of unbiblical parenting, let me also add that it is seen in our area of the world in premarital sex, underage drinking, drug use, and a lack of desire to get a job and get out of the house.

And the reason for those outcomes is that unbiblical parents never restrained sin as they should have in the lives of their children.

Instead of restraining sin through discipline and instruction, they asked questions to their kids or worse yet, they rarely interacted with their kids at all.

And when that happens, the kids parent the adults and not the other way around.

However, we desire to be biblical parents at Pine Grove.

WE desire to perform the role that God has given us as parents in the world.

WE desire to love our children, see them as gifts from the Lord, but to also obey the commands that God has given to us as parents.

Last week, we began our look at one verse in the NT.

That verse is found in the book of Ephesians, chapter 6, verse 4.

And it really simplifies what God desires out of Christian parents.

Let me read it to us again tonight as we seek to finish up part 2 of God's instruction to parents.

Ephesians 6:4.

4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

I mentioned this verse last week, but let me put it on the screen for us.

This is ***Colossians 3:21.***

21 Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.

And truly those are the only two verses directly addressing parenting in the NT.

Now, that doesn't mean that Christian parents only have to fulfill these verses to be pleasing to the Lord.

In fact, as I said last week, the Christian parent must be very familiar with much of the Bible since they are called to instruct as well as discipline.

But these verses are very helpful in giving us a bullseye as parents.

And just to review a little bit from last week, this command in verse 6 is two fold.

It has a negative and a positive element.

The negative element is that parents are to exasperate or frustrate their children.

They are not to anger them, and we take about ways to do that last week.

Favoritism, unreasonable achievement, inconsistent discipline, and a refusal to sacrifice for our kids are all ways to exasperate our children.

So first of all, biblical parenting is restrictive.

We cannot parent in a way that seeks to frustrate our kids.

Not look, there are 100s of ways to frustrate our kids, so don't think I touched them all last week.

I would simply say a guiding principle to prevent exasperation and anger is to refuse to parent in sin.

Anytime a parent acts in anger or pride or impatience, there is going to be frustration in the child.

If you are in sin, don't make parental decisions or take parental action.

Generally speaking, that will exasperate and frustrate your kids.

Deal with your sin and then you will be free to parent your children.

So, biblical parenting is restrictive.

We cannot parent in a way that exasperates our children.

Number 2 and this is where verse 6 turns positive.

Biblical is active.

We talked last week about the command to bring our kids up.

WE have to be active in their lives.

WE have to know who their friends are and what they are doing.

This is not overprotection, this is simply being a parent.

There is no such thing as a right to privacy in terms of your child's activities.

Doors stay open, phones stay available to be picked up and examined by parents at any time.

Friendships are approved by parents and ended by parents.

Now understand, this kind of parenting cannot be done from the couch.

It requires activity and oversight.

But not only are we active in the everyday aspects of our child's life, we are most active in their spiritual lives.

And this leads to a third principle of biblical parenting.

It is restrictive.

It is active.

It is corrective.

Parents, listen to me.

You are commanded by God to correct your children.

Listen to me, you will not scar them for life to tell them no.

You will not create hatred for you by saying that they can't do something.

You will not create resentment in their hearts towards you by correcting sinful behavior.

But you will create a monster sinner by refusing to correct them.

Discipline implies correction, and correction is not a bad word.

It is good word.

In fact, correcting a child is proof that you love Him.

Only an unloving parent would refuse to discipline their children.

I am going to read a series of verses from the book of Proverbs that show the value of discipline.

Proverbs 23:13-14

13

*Do not hold back discipline from the child,
Although you [i]strike him with the rod, he will
not die.*

14

*You shall [j]strike him with the rod
And rescue his soul from Sheol.*

Proverbs 13:24

24

*He who withholds his [s]rod hates his son,
But he who loves him [t]disciplines him diligently.*

Proverbs 22:15

15

*Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child;
The rod of discipline will remove it far from him.*

One more..

Proverbs 19:18

*Discipline your son while there is hope,
And do not desire [m]his death.*

So parents are commended to discipline their children and discipline requires correction.

And ultimately, correction will not scar your child for life, it will the life of your child.

Now, another theme of those verses is the use of the rod, which brings up the question of spanking children?

Should you spank children?

The Bible would say absolutely yes.

In fact, the Bible commands the use of the rod in the discipline of young children.

Now, I would tell you the rod could take the form of a hand or an instrument of some sort.

I think that is a parental preference but spanking is not optional.

It is a vital part of the discipline of young children.

Couple quick notes about the use of the rod.

#1 - It should be reserved for issues of direct disobedience to parental commands or issues of sin.

#2 - It should begin to disappear at later ages.

The preference in our family has been around the age of 10.

#3 - It should never be used in anger.

Which leads me to say that the rod is reserved for the backside.

The idea of striking the mouth or face or head doesn't seem to fit with the idea of loving correction.

#4 - It is not an outdated or outlawed method of correction.

To use the rod is to love the child and to prevent death and to correct behavior both in the past and in present.

God has not changed and sinful children have not changed either.

The rod has worked to remove sin through the ages and works to remove today.

Now let me add a note here..

Moms sometimes tend to be less excited about the use of the rod than fathers, but listen to ***Proverbs 29:15***.

15

***The rod and reproof give wisdom,
But a child [i]who gets his own way brings shame
to his mother.***

Moms, if you resist spanking your children for whatever reason, you are inviting shame on your parenting later in life.

Correct sin now or suffer later.

That is God's word.

So biblical parenting is restrictive.

You cannot exasperate your children.

Biblical parenting is active.

You must bring your children up.

Biblical parenting is corrective.

We discipline.

But a fourth aspect of biblical parenting that we see in Ephesians 6 is this.

Biblical parenting is instructive.

I mentioned last week that correction without instruction creates confusion in children.

But it is worse than that.

It eventually produces children who know how to behave but don't know why their behavior is right or wrong.

Listen to me parents.

Your goal in parenting is not to raise a child that know how to act in the company of others.

It is to raise a child who knows God in a saving way.

You can parent your hands to the bone and you can produce a kid who has great manners, pleasing personality, knows how interact with adults, but hates God in his or her heart.

The goal in parenting is not to change the behaviors of your children but to reach their hearts.

Listen to Proverbs 4:23..

23

***Watch over your heart with all diligence,
For from it flow the springs of life.***

The major of your instruction as a parent must address the heart of your kids.

So how do we accomplish this as parents?

#1 - Talk about God.

Let me take you to the parenting section of the OT.

So take your Bibles and turn to Deuteronomy 6.

5th book of the OT.

Israel is about to enter the Promised Land.

They have spent time traveling to the Promised Land and then wandering in the wilderness.

But the time has come for them to go into the land as a nation and God has instructions for parents.

Deuteronomy 6:1.

“Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, 2 so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that

your days may be prolonged. 3 O Israel, you should listen and [a]be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

Verse 4 is the first truth that we need to speak to the hearts of our kids.

- God is real.

4 “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!

Parents, find God in everything you do and tell your kids.

See God in creation.

Talk about serving God in the church.

Speak of God’s nature in your life.

Second truth to speak to the hearts of our kids.

- God is to be loved.

Verse 5..

5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Then note verses 6-9..

6 These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your sons 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 up. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as [b]frontals [c]on your forehead. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

What is the heart truth for your children there?

- God is to dominate your life.

Verse 10.

10 "Then it shall come about when the Lord your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, 11 and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you eat and are satisfied, 12 then watch yourself, that you do not forget the Lord

who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of [d]slavery.

What is the heart truth there?

- God is easily forgotten.

Verse 13.

13 You shall [e]fear only the Lord your God; and you shall [ff]worship Him and swear by His name.

What is the heart truth here?

- God is the only God.

Verse 14..

14 You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you, 15 for the Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; otherwise the anger of the Lord your God will be kindled against you, and He will [g]wipe you off the face of the earth. 16 “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah. 17 You should diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and His testimonies and His statutes which He has commanded you. 18 You shall do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord, that it may be well with you and that you may go in and possess the

good land which the Lord swore to give your fathers, 19 by driving out all your enemies from before you, as the Lord has spoken.

What is the heart truth here?

God is to be obeyed.

These are timeless truth that parents should teach their kids about God.

But along with that, parents must also teach their kids about themselves.

So that leads to another heart issue that we must instruct our children about.

#2 - *Talk about sin.*

If God is to be obeyed, what do we call it when we don't obey God?

We call it sin.

And that should be a word that your kids hear and understand from a young age.

Sin separates them from God.

And then the ultimate heart issue that parents must address in their children is the gospel.

#3 - Talk about the gospel.

If God commands we obey but we disobey, what happens?

We face judgment.

We face being away from God forever.

And then speak the truth of the gospel.

How Christ paid for sin by dying for guilty sinners.

How Christ rose again to show that God accepted his payment.

How Christ will trade places with us if we believe that He is God, that He died in our place, and that He rose again.

You would be shocked at how well little minds can understand substitutionary atonement.

You would be shocked at how well little minds could understand the need to believe in and trust Jesus.

And let me add this here.

When children show a desire to believe the gospel, always encourage it.

God may not have saved them, but we have no idea when he changes hearts.

Our job is to present the gospel and trust the Lord.

Never discourage even the littlest of faith.

Never laugh.

Never dismiss.

Anytime your child wants to pray to be saved, pray with them and brag on them.

Look, God told Nicodemus that he had as good a chance of seeing the wind blow as he had of seeing God bring about the new birth.

Now I also add this.

Though your child may have prayed a 1000 times to be saved, don't rush baptism.

I think baptism can wait until clear fruit of salvation can be seen.

And what is clear fruit?

It is fruit that isn't produced because of Dad and Mom's rules.

It is fruit that is produced from the work of the Spirit in the life of a believer.

Why in the world parents rush kids to baptism is beyond me.

No true believer would think for a minute that baptism saves, but so many push young kids into the water.

And that can be dangerous.

Nothing worse than an unbeliever who is convinced that they are a believer because they were baptized as a kid.

Look, children who believe become teens who believe, and teens who believe become young people who want to demonstrate that belief by being baptized.

Be patient.

If baptism doesn't save, and it doesn't, then allow the Lord to determine when they should be baptized.

He is always right.

And this brings us back to our ultimate priority in parenting.

Yes, we are to avoid exasperating our children.

Yes, we are to be active in our parenting.

Yes, we are to correct behavior though discipline.

But ultimately, we are to instruct our children in the Lord, and to address their hearts of sin and point them the gospel of Christ.

And we do that every day.

And when we do that, we restrain sin in the family and in society, but more importantly, we restrain sin from its ultimate purpose and that is to separate our children from the Lord forever.

Now let me end with some warning and encouragement.

Conclusion

#1 - Sin will keep you from biblical parenting.

If you are selfish, you will seek to please yourself instead of raising kids that please the Lord.

If you are greedy, you will seek to make more money instead of raising kids that please the Lord.

If you are lazy, you will seek to avoid the time and effort it takes to raise children that please the Lord.

As I look around society and even in the church, I see families where moms have to work to support lavish lifestyles.

As I look around society and even in the church, I see parents who make their hobbies their lives.

As I look around society and the even in the church, I see parents who don't think twice about passing their kids off to someone else because they are tired or lazy or fill in the blank.

And then 20 years later, they show up in my office weeping over what their kids are doing or who they are dating or what is they are committing.

And though children are responsible for their own sin, many parents will be accountable by God for their lack of biblical parenting.

#2 - Only the Spirit will make you a biblical parent.

I want to end where we began our look at the family.

Ephesians 5:15..

15 Therefore [j]be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, 16 [k]making the most of your time, because the days are evil. 17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, [l]for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,

The key to better parenting is not better advice.

It is not more will power.

It is not determination.

The key to better parenting is being a better Christian.

If someone was getting married and asked me to offer one sentence for a successful marriage.

I would say.

Be the best Christian you can be for the Lord, and you will be the best spouse imaginable.

And if someone asked me for parenting advice in one sentence, I would say the exact same thing.

You don't need a secret parenting approach.

You don't need a whole series on parenting.

Put your trust in Christ, and then live a life of obedience to him and you will be the best parent your kids could ever ask for.

And what does it mean to be the best Christian?

To live your life walking in the Spirit.

To be filled with Spirit is to be under the influence of the Spirit of God at all times.

And how do you live under his influence all the time?

You drink in his truth, and you live in his truth at all times.

Again, no one does this perfectly, but better parenting begins with submission to the Spirit and the Word.

If you do that, your parenting will get better and be pleasing to the Lord.

Always be seeking to kill sin and be more pleasing to God, and the Spirit will make you a better husband, wife, child, and parent.

And the end result in the world will be a peaceful family and a more peaceful society.

The ultimate will be a family that is together forever in heaven.

Let us pray.