

RESPONSIVE PARENTING

Principles for Raising Connected
& Healthy Kids

LEADER'S GUIDE

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Introduction

Reactive vs Responsive parenting. These are two terms you will understand well by the time we complete this study. *Reactive parenting* is harmful to children and has long-term negative effects on their adult behavior. *Responsive parenting* is what parenting was meant to be. It is the place where parents and children thrive and stay connected through meaningful communication and shared experience.

Many young parents are completely overwhelmed with parenting and are very discouraged. The major problems young couples face today are marital conflict, financial problems, lack of emotional connection, disagreement in their parenting style, an inability to control their strong negative emotions, and an inability to resolve the conflict. In addition, many young couples are isolated from extended families and do not know where to turn for help. They are distrusting of many people and worry about confidentiality if they did seek help.

The journey you are about to begin today could change your life and your family. You must, however, be willing to admit your shortcomings and recognize where you need to improve. Call on God to help you, and he will. The principles in this book work because they have been proven in families over many generations. Dig in, study this together with your spouse, and implement what you learn as soon as you grasp it. Keep a journal of your experience starting today! When the class is finished, share what you have experienced.

How concerned should we be about isolation in our children? *We should be very concerned about isolation because it is a serious problem. First, you need to examine the connection with the child and then figure out how you can help the child overcome her fears.*

How would you explain self-regulation? *Self-regulation is the ability to control your concentration, desires, and emotions.*

What is meant by self-defensive behavior? *All people are self-defensive, but we grow more self-defensive if we are hurt, compared, or shamed in any way.*

What is meant by parenting with a long view? *Parenting with the long view means that you develop the ability to see your daughter or son as a contented and successful adult and parent in a way that helps them become that person.*

What is meant by principles that produce outcomes? *There are simple principles, such as forgiveness and kindness, that if they are sown in a child's life, they will produce fruit, such as clarity and acceptance.*

How does the way we handle life influence the way our children handle life? *They will handle it the same way we do. Whether that is good or bad, it is an irrefutable fact.*

Chapter 1: Reactive Parenting—How Did We Get Here?

Reactive parenting is done in reaction to something, whether the child or the parent's own problems. Reactive parenting is charged with negative emotion like frustration, anger, and anxiety. There are two styles of reactive parenting: *permissive parenting*, which is an obsessive effort to make the child happy at any cost and *authoritarian parenting*, which is an obsession to make the child obey the rules.

Permissive parenting seeks a warm connection with the child, and authoritarian parenting demands respect. Children of permissive parents tend to act out because they feel uninhibited, while children of authoritarian parents internalize their anxiety. Both of these reactive styles produce poor results; they are nonetheless very prevalent, especially permissive parenting. Reactive parenting is not effective in resolving conflict. In fact, the opposite is true, it perpetuates conflict. It diminishes self-esteem, stunts autonomy, and creates defensive behavior. The effect of reactive parenting is low self-esteem in children.

What is wrong with having a favorite child or comparing one child to another? *It is wrong for the other children and wrong for the favorite. All children should know the unconditional love of their parents. The compared child will feel they can never measure up. They will learn how to strive for approval and suffer low self-esteem. They will feel a lack of acceptance.*

What happens to the children when parents don't agree on the parenting style? *It confuses them, and they will quickly learn how to play their parents against each other.*

Why is shame so damaging to a child? *It causes a child to doubt their worth and leads to loss of emotional control and isolation.*

Why is withholding love from a child so hurtful to the child? *It is hurtful because a child wonders, What is wrong with me that my mother or father does not love me?*

Why is modeling self-control so important to good parenting? *When self-control is modeled, it makes it possible to learn how to control oneself. Without the model, it is nearly impossible.*

How can we make good emotional deposits into our children's lives? *We can help them feel loved always and affirm them for who they are. Then when their peers or others challenge them, they will have a strong self-esteem to survive.*

Chapter 2: Parenting Styles & Self-Esteem

We were made for connection with God and with others. The connection between mom and dad and each child is essential for there to be good parenting. Through that connection flows everything—the emotional intimacy we all need, the principles we want to instill, the self-esteem we hope they acquire, and the development of their own personality. Many things can destroy that connection, such as neglect (in fact neglect is just another form of abuse), unresolved conflict, and divorce.

Connection is the starting point for good parenting. If it is not there, then find a way to reconnect. The self-esteem of your child depends on it. Once we have the connection, we seek to find “The Way” God has for each child (Prov 22:6), primarily through acceptance of who they are (their personality and their interests). Find that way, and his self-esteem will grow.

What is the impact of seeing your parents treat each other with disrespect and with respect? *Children imitate the behavior they see modeled for them. They not only treat each other the same way, but they will also treat their future spouse that way.*

Why is behavior modification not the best approach for older children and teens? *Behavior modification works best for very small children, but as they get older, we want to use the conceptual approach. That means they start learning about responsibility, respect, and industry and not just getting a prize.*

Explain what *autonomy* is and why it is so important to build a child's autonomy. *Autonomy is the ability of the child to function independent of their parents. This includes their skill acquisition, social adeptness, language and personality development, and acceptance of foundational principles.*

What are some of the ways to decrease your child's defensive behavior? *Helping them overcome their fears, building a stronger self-esteem, and helping them grow their autonomy.*

What are the effects on parents and children of unresolved conflict? *Unresolved conflict leaves collateral damage like a tornado. Without conflict resolution, the child remains in a state of chaos, and that confusion goes with them into adult life.*

What is needed to resolve conflict in the home? *A commitment to respect each other and maintain the connection with everyone in the family.*

What happens to a child where the parents withhold affection? *The child interprets the actions of the parent as underscoring their unworthiness, and it contributes to their low self-esteem. Children with low self-esteem have a lower threshold for self-control when facing negative experiences.*

Chapter 3: Where It All Began—Our Families of Origin

It is impossible to underestimate the impact of our families of origin. If a child grows up in a home where there is constant conflict, that child will most likely have a low self-esteem. We are influenced by the quality of our parents' relationship, how they treat each other, how they resolve their conflicts, and how well they are connected. If they have good emotional control, we probably will too, and if they don't, we won't. We tend to treat our spouse the way we saw our parents treat each other. We tend to parent the way we experienced their parenting growing up. We imbibe our parent's prejudices and their good qualities. We are the product of our family of origin.

What things are children at a risk of experiencing if exposed to unresolved conflict in the home? *They are at risk of depression, anxiety, or alcohol abuse. These children will develop higher levels of defensive behavior and will have more trouble with social interaction and academic success.*

What are some of the ways children react to unresolved conflict? *Children become susceptible to so many different things when they are exposed to continual unresolved conflict. They may withdraw, do poorly in school, have few friends, or try to escape their home through drugs or illicit sexual activity. It may take years for these things to happen, but the seeds are sown in the early years of a child's life.*

What does research say about the ways substance abuse affects parenting? *Parents who are substance abusers are poor parents. They will be harsh or neglectful. They will be disconnected and unable to give their children what they need when they need it.*

What does the concept of *accessibility* mean to a child? *The concept of accessibility is simply how free the child feels to come to the parent with any doubt or need. A very loving parent may deprive their child of accessibility because of their anxiety or fretting over the finances or any other problem.*

How true is it that children develop their parents' attitudes? *It is absolutely true! What we are is what our children become. If our attitudes are lousy, they will show up in our children. If they are good, then they will follow our lead.*

What is meant by saying a child's bad behavior is only a symptom of the real problem? *Often parents want to fix their child, but the child only exposes the problems existent in the family.*

Chapter 4: Responsive Parenting

Reactive parenting is propelled by negative emotion, is reckless, impulsive, and causes collateral damage to those nearby. Responsive parenting is guided by positive emotion, is safe, and requires us to be thoughtful and responsible, not impulsive and reactive. It is parenting with the head first and then the heart. There is plenty of emotion and connection, but they are under the control of a rational brain. Responsive parenting is deliberate, with thoughtful dependence on God. It demonstrates emotional control that rises above the reactive interaction that can happen because of irritability or temperament. This style of parenting offers the child much needed emotional availability and warmth and provides the atmosphere in which children flourish. Responsive parenting creates a sense of dignity and purpose in the children.

How can a person change a dysfunctional pattern such as lying, yelling, or avoidance? *It is hard to change a dysfunctional pattern because they are engrained in our psyche, but we can begin to form new healthy patterns that eventually uproot them and replace them.*

When their parents do not collaborate in parenting, what message is conveyed to the children? *The children interpret that message that mom does not think dad is right and vice-versa. It is all very confusing for children when parents do not get on the same page.*

How does being patient and observant help you be a responsive parent? *Sometimes being responsive means that you are willing to overlook irritating behavior for the moment to get to the bottom of the issue. The responsive parent operates under control even if the child does not.*

Explain what is meant by *delayed gratification* as a concept, and how do we teach it to our children? *Delayed gratification simply means I am willing to wait for the appropriate time to get what I want. This translates into every area of life and prepares a child for adulthood.*

Why is control and connectedness such an important part of being a responsive parent? *Being a responsive parent means that you appreciate structure and control while still being flexible and able to see what is bothering your child. However, you will not allow the child to defy your authority.*

What factors enable children and adolescents to better internalize their parents' values? *When the children and teenagers see their parents live out their values without any inconsistencies, they want to adopt their values as their own.*

Chapter 5: Pictures of Responsive Parenting

Maybe you remember being with your mom or dad when you were a child, and that memory is with you today in a special way. I can remember riding with my father as he drove trucks. He was so gentle and proud to have me with him even though I was so little. I can still remember the sights, sounds, and even the smells of the places we went. I felt safe, and my brain recorded these very powerful memories that can today be triggered by certain smells or sounds. Good childhood memories are the focus of connection where we flourished in a home where we felt loved. How important are good childhood memories? What are some of your most meaningful ones?

Why do some parents fearfully avoid confrontation with their children? *Because they are afraid of losing the child's affection and attention, or they may feel guilty because they work.*

How does teaching a child to be respectful positively affect their future social interactions? *What they learn as a child will be the pattern for future interaction with others.*

How does inconsistency in discipline confuse a child? *A child needs consistency, and if we are inconsistent with our discipline, they are easily confused.*

Why should a parent never discipline a child impulsively? *We want to discipline when we are in control of our emotions and senses because only then will it be appropriate.*

How does reactive parenting deny accessibility to your child? *When we are reactive, a child is not drawn to us but instead pushed away from us.*

Forgiveness keeps what things out of our lives and allows what other things in? *It keeps resentment and bitterness out, but allows love and compassion in.*

What does the illustration of the cat and the squirrel demonstrate? *Some people are more like the cat than the squirrel, always waiting for the other person to apologize before they forgive.*

Chapter 6: Responsive Parenting Strategies

To be emotionally connected as a family, we have to have quality family time. Eating meals together as a family is so important because it is a wonderful opportunity to share time together, to talk, and to laugh, which we need to stay connected. Important ventures always have a plan with strategies. The invasion of D-Day was planned for over two years before it happened on June 6, 1944. Even day-to-day operations at work and school follow a plan, then why not the family?

If we want to become responsive parents, we need a strategy. For example, if young parents can agree on teaching respect to their children, and they start early, they will see the dividends for years to come. Another example is, as parents, our job is not to keep our children from being bored. If we do that, we are creating a co-dependency. Our will children see us as their recreation directors and not as their parents.

Why should children's involvement in sports, arts, academics, etc. be carefully considered? *Because children need to be learning responsibility and perseverance with each endeavor.*

How are children most influenced in the way they treat others? *By watching how their mother and father treat each other.*

What is *learned helplessness*? *When a parent says to himself or herself, "I can't do anything with this child." They are accepting their own helplessness.*

What causes children to be resilient? *When parents accept them as they are and apologize for their own shortcomings.*

Does parenting differ from one child to the next? *We teach all children the same principles, but we apply them differently.*

Inflexibility in parenting produces what in our children? *Anxiety and depression.*

How can a parent help a child who has experienced shame? *Help them to know they are loved and accepted unconditionally and then help them understand what happened to them.*

Chapter 7: Helping Our Children Grow Their Personalities

When we make our children feel safe and loved and refuse to pick a favorite child, then they will flourish. It is important to understand that we do not bond on the same level with each child at the same time. When we refuse to compare them and instead accept them as they are, their personalities begin to blossom. If we are too controlling, then they will be dependent on us, and if we are under-controlling, they will be unprepared for life. We want to see their personality and their autonomy grow together. We do that through unconditional acceptance, forgiveness, exercising our own emotional control, and learning to be resourceful as parents.

How can a parent better prepare their children to experience rejection? *When they know they are loved unconditionally and that you are always there for them, they can learn to overcome rejection.*

How does emotional intelligence help us be resourceful in parenting? *It enables you to control your emotions and defuse volatile situations with humor and wit while being responsive instead of reactive.*

When we teach a child self-worth, that child is freed from what things? *The feeling of being compelled to strive for recognition and approval from others.*

What is meant by the phrase *making meaning out of chaos*? *Children need explanations to understand life. It is our job as parents to provide meaningful explanations for the chaos they experience, especially the part we cause.*

Explain the connection between the words *redemption* and *accommodation*. *What God redeems, he accommodates. Some things in a child's life just doesn't make sense, but with the parent's help and a vibrant faith, they learn to accommodate.*

How does God help us overcome painful memories? *By helping us view them differently. This is what the song "Amazing Grace" expresses: "Now I See."*

Chapter 8: When Parents Combine Their Gifts

When mothers and fathers have a cooperative parenting style, they minimize conflict. When parents cooperate with each other, children are less confused and respond better and faster. Responsive parenting helps parents enjoy their children more by helping them appreciate each stage of development instead of wishing for the next one to come. The parents are there to share the load of parenting with each other.

Collaboration eliminates the competition and recognizes that mothers can do things that dads are not very good at, and dads can do things that are harder for mothers to teach their children. Both bring a different skill set and a different mindset to the task of parenting, and both complement each other. When two parents agree, they have a better chance of being responsive. Reactive parenting is about putting out fires, but responsive parenting wants to know how the fire got started so it doesn't happen again. Responsive parenting even teaches the kids how to put out the fire.

Why is it important for both parents to play with infants and small children? *It accelerates their learning of new skills and helps them bond with both parents.*

What are the benefits of a secure attachment with mom and dad? *It promotes feelings of self-worth and becomes the platform for future interaction.*

What happens to children when parents keep their promises to them? *Children learn the value of a promise and learn to keep their promises with others.*

Besides teaching children appropriate behavior and social adjustment, what are parents simultaneously teaching their children? *The proper roles of being a mother and father.*

How does a child benefit from watching parents take ownership of their own lives? *The parents' values make sense to them when they see the principles applied by their parents.*

Why is it so important for a child to have a model right in front of them on how to live life? *They learn to choose the right path faster and have less emotional crashes.*

Chapter 9: Combating Shame with Acceptance

Reactive parenting is associated with shame and fear—two dangerous components that hinder healthy development. Responsive parenting is deliberate and thoughtful. It employs mature emotional control from the parent that rises above the reactive interaction. This style of parenting offers the child much needed emotional availability and warmth. Children need parents who are approachable no matter what the situation. They need to know that they will be heard and the parent will make an informed decision about their complaint. Most of us can remember some situation we faced growing up when we didn't feel there was any accessibility.

What kind of reactions can shame cause in our children? *It sends the message that they are not worth as much as they think they are, and it causes them to lose control of their emotions. It can also cause them to feel they are a victim and blame others, or it can cause them to isolate themselves.*

How does God often heal the shame a child has experienced? *Through the love and compassion of a parent.*

How important to our sense of self-esteem is a relationship with our creator? *God made us with a longing for him, and it can't be filled with anything else.*

How can we build an unassailable self-esteem in our children? *From infancy on, love them and make them feel safe; stay connected to them and introduce them to Jesus as soon as you can.*

What is meant by the special window for a child? *The window from birth to two sets the child's pace of development with motor skills, language, personality development, social skills, and other things.*

What happens to a child when they feel emotionally disconnected? *A child may feel abandoned and therefore act out in anger or sadness.*

What about an adult when they feel disconnected in a marriage? *They may feel a sense of betrayal that the other person has stopped caring, stopped paying attention, and stopped fighting for the relationship.*

Chapter 10: Resolving Conflict

We all long for connection because God made us that way. This connection was meant to begin in the earliest stages of our lives. Isolation may be more damaging to an infant than early mistreatment. Isolation hinders the baby's neurological brain circuitry from fully developing, which will eventually show up in the child's ability to concentrate and control his emotions. A baby who is ignored for hours on end in a neglectful home will eventually stop crying. The emotions of this little infant just shut down.

Men or women who show little emotion usually grew up with poor connections. What we all need and desire is to be loved, accepted, and connected all through life. We all need to make meaning out of confusing communication and clarify our thoughts and feelings. Making meaning out of confusing communication or apologizing for misspoken words helps create cohesion.

Is conflict always a bad thing in a family?

Only if it is unresolved. Children need to have their parents talk through a conflict with them.

What happens for children when they see and hear their parents talk through a family conflict?

They learn how to handle conflict and how to resolve it.

What is wrong with identifying a problem member of the family? *A particular child may be acting out, but the whole family has a problem until they work it out.*

What is the best way to prevent any member of the family from getting hurt and becoming bitter?

Through forgiveness. Negative emotion isn't good for the brain and the whole body.

How often should we forgive?

Daily, because it is the lubrication that keeps the family dynamics flowing properly.

How does a family create an other-person focus in the family? *By fostering a loving, caring attitude toward each member of the family and not rewarding selfishness.*

Why is it important to grow your faith in God as a parent?

Because the stronger your faith is, the better parent you will be.

Chapter 11: Don't Ever Quit!

Whatever you do, don't quit! Don't quit on your marriage, no matter how hard it gets. Get help through counseling, reading good books, and talking to people who are older and whom you admire. Look at how their kids turned out and ask them what they did. Share your struggles with someone who really cares about you and who will pray for you. Don't give up on your kids no matter how difficult it gets. Never stop praying for them and loving them. If you don't give up on them, they won't give up on you. The fact that you are there year after year, even when they mess up, is what gives them hope and confidence. That is what you call unconditional love. There isn't a parent out there who at one time or another didn't feel like a failure. The only difference between responsible and irresponsible parents is one thing. The responsible parent does not quit!

What does it mean to you to not quit on your marriage and family? *It means never mentioning divorce, never walking out, never messing up without coming back and apologizing.*

Where can you find help for your marriage? *Your pastor, a good biblically thinking counselor, or couples that have a good marriage and have done a good job raising their children.*

Why is it important to admit our mistakes and learn from them? *Until we admit our mistakes, they continue to control us, but once we admit them, we can help our children to not make the same mistakes.*

How are discipline and love related in parenting? *When we discipline, we do so in love, otherwise the discipline will not accomplish what we want it to.*

Why is prayer such an important component in parenting? *So many issues will be beyond our ability to resolve, but none of them are beyond God's ability.*

What have you lost that you long to recover? *It may be your emotional intimacy in marriage or your cohesion as a family. You don't have to settle for loss; you can recover it with God's help.*

In the story of the red lizard, how much are we mastered by our natural desires? *Sometimes people live for years in bondage to anger, sadness, or immaturity.*

Chapter 12: Attitude Is Everything

It all comes down to one little word—attitude. It is impossible to stress how important attitude is in life. It is our compass that defines our direction. It is our altimeter that influences our level of functioning. It is the motor that drives our values and beliefs. Unless our attitude is attached to something immovable such as our belief in God and his Word, our attitude will fluctuate in reaction to day-to-day events.

Attitude is everything when it comes to parenting. Your attitude as the parent sets the tone for the children. If you are irritable and hard to get along with, they will follow your example. The older child will treat the younger the way you are treating him or even the way you are treating your spouse. If you have a persevering attitude that is encouraging, they will model that. When was the last time you had a meaningful conversation with your kids about attitude?

How can we help our children develop a strong emotional intelligence? *We can do that by giving them a live model of how to respond to life's complicated messes with control, poise, and trust in God.*

Why do parents need quiet time to slow down and reflect on God's greatness and sovereignty? *When we are speeding through our days, we miss seeing the beauty of God's handiwork, whether it is the creation around us or what he is doing in our kids.*

What happens to us when we experience loneliness? *We begin to feel alone and abandoned. We are overwhelmed with negative emotions, which block out the true picture.*

Why is it import to express how we feel to God? *First, because God will listen and second, it does us good to get it out. Then we can hear what God has to say to us.*

What is the difference between *loneness* and *loneliness*? *Loneliness brings doubt and causes us to question our self-worth, and it is self-focused. Loneness is reflective and is God-focused.*

How do we learn to prioritize and separate worthy from unworthy things in our lives and families? *By knowing and living out God's Word and allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us in our family life.*

Why is doing the right thing never a bad thing? *Even when it may seem like a bad thing, the right thing is always right regardless of the consequences.*

Chapter 13: Overcoming Adversity

Responsive parenting is all about parenting your child in such a way that he or she develops a capacity to manage life successfully without you. Often young parents choose making their child happy as the goal of parenting. This kind of parenting can be an overwhelming task, especially when your child realizes that this is your goal.

There are some real problems with the “trying to make your child happy” parenting style because it creates dependence and diminishes autonomy in the child. Secondly, it's not real life because when your child is old enough to go to school or be around other people, she will discover things are very different. The teacher cannot see her principle task as trying to make your child happy. Of course, we all want our children to be happy, but happiness has to come as a result of other things, not because it is our primary pursuit in life.

How can we learn from our mistakes? *We first have to be willing to admit our mistakes and then use them as teaching tools for our children.*

Why is making a child happy not the primary goal of good parenting? *Good parenting revolves around making good and wise choices every day. Some of those choices may make your child momentarily unhappy.*

How many ways are there to look at adversity? *More than one, that's for sure, because we tend to look at adversity as always bad. Often, however, adversity is an opportunity to grow.*

How and when is character developed? *It is developed as we are growing up, and it is revealed in testing and trials.*

What is the secret of the Christian life that will influence your children? *It is the ability to trust God in the good and bad and in the easy and hard times.*

Can a parent who has failed ever raise good kids? *Yes, just look at Jacob. He was a mess, but he changed, and he raised a Joseph.*

Chapter 14: Learning Self-Control

The older I get, the more I realize that self-control is so important in life. It is essential to being good at anything we do. Just think about how great athletes have to continually work on self-control in their handling of the ball, the bat, or whatever their sport requires. Self-control is about mastering concentration and staying focused. However, the greatest self-control is needed when it comes to interpersonal relationships. If you want to be a good husband or wife or great parent, you have to learn to exercise self-control. Think about the needed self-control it requires to break a negative old habit by taking responsibility for it and refusing to make excuses for it.

How many areas of life are related to self-control? *It is essential to learning skills, acquiring social competency, academic success, athletic training, mastering our attention, and controlling our desires.*

How do we learn to master self-control over our emotions? *We should begin when we are very little, as we understand our emotions and how to control them.*

What are the signs a person is exercising self-control? *They are good listeners, they are less self-defensive, and what they do say is helpful.*

What essential qualities does self-control employ? *It is always respectful and accountable.*

What does "She knows how to push my buttons" really mean? *It indicates an avoidance from taking responsibility for his own emotions.*

What is an effective way to overcome anxiety? *To cast our anxieties on the Lord who will carry them for us.*

If we are still making excuses for our lack of self-control, then what does that indicate? *We are caught in a web of deceit.*

Chapter 15: Growing Future Mothers & Fathers

Why is it so important to have a good marriage in order to be a good parent? Because you are influencing your children by your marriage. Why is it so important to be honest and authentic with your spouse and children? Because this is the only way to produce that same authenticity in them. Why is it so important to exercise self-control in your interaction with your family? Because you are teaching your children how to interact with others. Why is it so important to have a clear and understandable faith? Because it is the only kind your children will readily accept from you as their own.

Our children will learn to tolerate negative emotion, such as being patient with another person who is upset or angry, if they have seen us do that. If they have felt our impatience and disregard for their feelings and desires, they will do the same to their peers. If, on the other hand, they have seen patience modeled and respect demonstrated, they will do that. If they have seen our determination to be truthful and honest time and time again, then they will follow that pattern.

What does it mean to *put a child in a bind* when the mother and the father do not agree on how to discipline the child? *The child suffers from seeing the confusion between his parents. His bind is he cannot support the one without feeling like he is betraying the other.*

What happens to a child who has been dumped on by a parent complaining about the other parent? *The child is forced to carry a burden he or she was never meant to carry.*

How do children learn to tolerate negative emotions? *From watching how well we do it.*

What are two dysfunctional ways to parent teenagers? *One is to treat them as if they were grown and can make all their own decisions, and the second is to treat them as children, which is demeaning.*

What is harmful about protecting teens from making mistakes? *We hope we have taught them well, but they must be allowed to make mistakes so they can learn from them and exercise their own autonomy.*

Helping your child find his or her own identity takes two parents. *How do we resist the temptation to obligate them to follow a path that is not theirs? We help them find their path by collaborating as mothers and fathers and by seeking God's help.*

Chapter 16: Passing the Torch of Faith

Good parenting helps your child connect the dots so they will be prepared for adult life. We have talked about: *forgiveness, accessibility, making meaning out of chaos, connection, acceptance, resolution, turning negative emotion into positive emotion, modeling, self-control, authenticity, and resiliency.* However, the list would not be complete without talking about *faith*.

Faith is the essential component that children need to finish the picture. Specifically, they need to see your faith modeled in front of them. They need to see and experience a faith that makes sense—a faith that works. It is helpful to realize that our children see our faith as a lot of details that they don't understand. That is why it is so important to help them get the big picture of what God is doing in this world and in our lives. One of the most intriguing ways to make sense of your faith for your children is to help them see how it works in your family.

Why is it so important for children to see and experience their parents' faith? *It only makes sense if they see it work in the two most important people in their lives.*

What is meant by the saying *our faith must be practical in the family*? *It must make a difference in how you treat each other and how you address the complex situations that confront the family.*

Is there any part of life that is not influenced by our faith? *No, at least there should not be. We belong to God, and our purpose is to bring glory to God as individuals and as families.*

Can God help calm the storms of conflict in homes? *Yes, he can if we reach out to him.*

What are techniques to help couples learn to control their arguing? *Implement the never list, learn to discuss not argue, and call a truce when necessary.*

What is the benefit to the children to have a family meeting? *It teaches the children how to take responsibility for your actions, such as what a real apology is. It helps children make sense of the chaos.*

What happens to us when we realize our purpose comes from our creator? *We stop obsessing about what other people think of us.*

Appendix

Principles That Produce Outcomes in Children

Think of these principles as seed that is sown in the lives of your children. Your daily interaction with your family in a responsive way, as we have seen in this book, will make these seeds germinate and grow into beautiful plants. Think of parenting as planting, watering, fertilizing, and cultivating.

- **Principle of Forgiveness:** When parents forgive, it gives children clarity and resiliency.
- **Principle of Self-Control:** When parents have self-control, it gives children accessibility.
- **Principle of Respect:** When parents respect each other, children experience acceptance.
- **Principle of Responsibility:** When parents model responsibility, children acquire character.
- **Principle of Accountability:** When parents are accountable, children feel connection.
- **Principle of Humility:** When parents demonstrate humility, children learn authenticity.
- **Principle of Kindness:** When parents are kind and patient, children learn the skill of resolving conflict.
- **Principle of Generosity:** When parents are generous, children experience the joy of sharing.
- **Principle of Diligence:** When parents are diligent, children learn to be industrious.
- **Principle of Faith:** When parents possess genuine faith, children embrace it and model it.
- **Principle of Integrity:** When parents keep their promises, children learn the value of commitment.
- **Principle of Courage:** When parents model courage, children overcome their fears.
- **Principle of Trust:** When parents demonstrate trust, children develop the ability to believe.
- **Principle of Self-Restraint:** When parents demonstrate self-restraint, children learn to wait.
- **Principle of Faithfulness:** When parents are faithful to each other, children learn to love.

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