

BIBLICAL PARENTING 101



Week 4: The Basics of Biblical Parenting (cont'd)

The Basics of Parenting in Ephesians 6:1-4 (cont'd)

The Gentle Parenting Movement

See The Alisa Childers Podcast

*#244 Should Christians Practice Gentle Parenting?,
with Abbie Halberstadt – May 5, 2024*



Characteristics and Dangers of the Gentle Parenting Movement

1. Spectrum of views. Secular psychological method that has seeped into Christianity.
2. Framed as a reaction to authoritarian parenting. However, eviscerates any rightful authority of the parents.
3. Puts parents and children on equal ground. Collaborative process. Parent is a facilitator for child's autonomy. Parents are discouraged from trying to shape children.
4. Almost zero consequences for transgressing boundaries. Punishment creates a toxic environment which is regarded as abusive, harmful, and psychologically damaging.
5. Presupposes all people are born morally good or neutral.
6. But how do you explain atoning sacrifice of Christ who is punished for our sins?
7. Avoid both negative and positive reinforcement.
8. Parent is spectator. Keeps child safe as they grow into person they want to be.
9. All emotions are valid. No sinful emotions. Violent behavior is redirected.
10. Asks children what they want to do in critical matters as opposed to traditional Biblical parenting which seeks to give them clear directives.
11. Requires little of children. No burdens or obligations. No personal responsibility.
12. Antithetical to Biblical teaching. Abdicates both parents and children's responsibilities toward one another and God.

The Basics of Parenting in Ephesians 6:1-4 (cont'd)

The Parent who Provokes and Exasperates their Children (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21)



While children are to be obedient to their parents, they are also to be respected as persons made in the image of God. Thus, they should never be manipulated, exploited, crushed or treated as less than they deserve. Furthermore, they need the right structures, routines, rules, etc. to flourish. Anger in children is provoked when a repeated ongoing pattern of mistreatment or neglect gradually builds up until a deep-seated despair, anger and resentment boils over into settled hostility and eventually rebellion if unchecked.

The Parent who Provokes and Exasperates their Children

7) *Perfectionist Parent*. Like a Pharisee (Matt. 23:4). Put demands on children they could never meet, sometimes in non-moral ways (e.g., athletics, school grades, etc.). Pressure to excel. Overly critical. Always finding fault (**Prov. 19:11**). Conveys perfection in themselves (hypocrisy). Communicating that you are always right, never admit sin, or seek forgiveness, say one thing but do another, double standards – one for children, another for parents. Expresses no joy or praise in children's accomplishments. Such parents also tend to major on minor, insignificant points while missing the big picture.

8) *Unloving Parent*. If there is any love, it must be a secret because they never show it. Cold, aloof, apathetic OR outright cruel and unkind. Make children feel unwanted (never have time for/ sacrifice for, etc.). Physically present but emotional absent, uninterested/ never have fun, laughing, playing, etc. Never offer praise or encouragement. No affection, hugs, kisses, etc. To say, "I love you" is too mushy, uncomfortable.

9) *Stingy Parent*. Lack of generosity (opposite of indulging—Indulgent Parent). Never let their child do things they want. Too restrictive. Stingy with gifts, money. No special things done for the child (e.g., birthday parties, vacations, etc.).

10) ***Indulgent Parent***. Spoils their children (opposite of stingy). Often afraid their child won't like them, so they give in to their demands. Allows too much freedom. Does not provide enough or appropriate discipline (often uses ineffective methods of discipline like 'time-out', bribery, trying to reason, etc.). Always trying to please them and not offend them. Often a child-centered home where children are doing way too much. Too many activities, shuttling them to dance lessons, volleyball practice, birthday parties, robotics team, etc. Involved in things that replace healthy time and interaction at home and especially church.

11) ***Submissive Parent***. Roles reversed. Abdicates their authority. Encourages child to always get his way (**Prov. 29:15**). Let's child decide too much ("Do want to eat your peas?"; Do you want to go to bed now?", etc.). Thinks this is loving. Very child-centered home. Try to keep the peace by appeasing the child. Allow themselves to be manipulated by their child. The children run the show. Afraid to offend them.

12) ***Arbitrary/ Inconsistent Parent***. Doesn't maintain clear objectives and patterns, routines, or methods in parenting. Never know what the rules or consequences are. The goal posts are always changing. Never know what to expect. Can never please them. Sometimes too many rules to remember and keep up with OR not enough rules to maintain order. Thus, they have inconsistent, arbitrary discipline. Sometimes disciplines children and at other times allow children to get away with sinful behavior. Such parents tend to be lazy, slothful, undisciplined, and apathetic. Too much trouble to do the hard work of parenting.

13) ***Uninvolved Parent***. Parents who are hands off. Doesn't really care what their children do. Too busy to have time for the kids. More important things to do. Show little interest. Pre-occupied with their own interests. Doesn't help them with homework, projects. Don't play with them, go do things together. Doesn't come to their sporting events, school events, etc. Let them make all their own decisions.

14) ***Insensitive Parent***. Insensitive to a child's unique temperament/ needs, etc. Doesn't spend enough time trying to get to know and understand their children. Talks too much and doesn't listen to their children, so they don't really know them very well (same as Uninvolved Parent). This is often a problem for fathers.

15) ***Non-listening Parent***. Don't give children a chance to give their side of the story (**Prov. 18:17**) or express their own ideas. Don't allow children to speak; often shame them to silence or take over conversation so they have no chance to speak (**Prov. 18:13**). Parents here often make false assumptions about what is really going on and what their children really think. Or times, they are simply uninterested in their child's life.

16) ***Omniscient/ Presumptuous Parent***. Thinks he always knows what his child is thinking and doing (behind the parent's back) or assumes what his motives might be (usually assuming the worst). Only God knows our motives (1 Cor. 4:5). Jumps to conclusions without having all the facts or evidence (**Prov. 18:13**).

17) ***Exaggerating Parent***. Overstating one's case. Assumes the best in themselves and the worst in their children. Exaggerates their own attributes and positive actions while downplaying their children's. "Look at all I do for you!" "I slave day in and day out while you live a carefree life!" "You always leave your bedroom a mess." "You never do your chores." "You're playing video games all day long."

18) ***Condescending Parent***. Putting down/ degrading/ name-calling/ verbal abuse (Eph. 4:29)– overpowering with superior wit, sarcasm, threats of physical force, unjustly withholding privileges, taking something precious away, etc. Shaming into submission.

19) ***The Humiliating Parent***. Making fun of children at their expense, teasing in a cruel way (Job 17:1-2). Ridicule or mock them. Making fun or teasing is especially dangerous when children may have deficiencies in intelligence ("stupid"), athletic skills, good looks ("ugly"), motor coordination (clumsy), etc. Subjecting them to public humiliation is really bad! On the other hand, some parents make light of their child's sin, treating their sinful behavior as if it is funny or a source of entertainment.

20) ***Manipulating Parent***. Manipulate children to serve their own agenda. Bribing them into obedience (different than offering incentives for do a job well done – a good form of bribery?). Bribing children for doing what should be their normal duty does not teach them responsibility, but teaches them to feel entitled. Show love and favor when good, withdraw love and favor when bad as a form of punishment (Heb. 12:6 – discipline in love).

21) **Perfect Image Parent**. Always afraid of children hurting their reputation and that others might think poorly of them. They have to keep up appearances. “Don’t embarrass me!”

22) **Comparing Parent**. Always comparing child to their sibling or someone’s “perfect” child (2 Cor. 10:12). Why can’t you be like so and so? Favoritism (e.g., Joseph and his brothers).

23) **Despairing Parent**. Feels sorry for him or herself (self-pity—a subtle form of selfishness). Always complaining. Always a victim of some wrong. Grumpy. Nothing is good. The world is a terrible place and everyone and everything around them is out to get them. Glass is half-empty. No hope. No happiness. All is gloom and doom.

24) **Untrustworthy Parent**. Don’t keep promises. Says one thing but does another (Matt. 5:37; Col. 3:9). Unreliable, undependable, unpredictable. Repeated disappointments for children lead them to bitterness, resentment, and anger.

25) **Vicarious Parent**. See themselves thru child. Dad’s trying to make sons be great athletes. Makes me look great. Too hands on. Micromanage all the child does. Overbearing. Doesn’t let the child choose. Forces them into things they have no desire, skill, aptitude, fitness for.

26) **Tradition-Driven Parent**. Elevates family traditions to level of Biblical commands (e.g., holiday traditions, certain routines, or this is the way I did it growing up). No freedom to try something different (Gal. 5:1).