

How Does the Bible Apply to Parenting?

I. Direct parenting texts

^{ESV} Ephesians 6:4 Fathers . . . *bring up [your children] in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

A. Instruction

1. **Change the child's spiritual affections:** process by seeing & savoring the glory of Christ in Scripture (his character and beauty shown in the history of redemption) and reflected by his people.
2. **Increase the child's knowledge of the Bible, the way of salvation and gospel-of-grace oriented change, and the natural consequences of good and evil:** use Bible stories, moral stories (CD, DVD, books).
3. **Shape the behavior and speech to reflect love for God and people:** teach proper ways of loving by curiosity about people, learning to listen and spend time with people, learn to be led by the Spirit and the Word.
4. **Parental Modeling:** parents as examples of INTIMACY showing love, delight, knowledge, listening, with you & in you patterns in four dimensions evident to the child(ren): with God, with each other in the marriage, with the children, with those outside the family (relatives, friends, neighbors, fellow believers in the church).

B. Discipline

1. **Self-knowledge→repentance:** Through misbehavior and disobedience to parents and other authorities, frustrations with duties and relationships, the child should be gaining knowledge of his/her heart idolatries and sin patterns and be directed to repentance before God and seeking forgiveness from people he/she has sinned against or disobeyed. Use of the ROD up through age 8. This should help the child to fear and respect parents as representatives who point to the fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom, taking obedience seriously.
2. **Culture knowledge→Christian critique:** through increasing awareness of sin and evil in the world by exposure to books, media, TV, movies, teach the child not to love the world or the things in it (1 John 2:15-17), and to resist the temptations aroused by such evil. The parental goal must not be shutting out all influences of non-Christian culture, but inoculating children against it by permitting them to experience small doses of its evil realities and interacting with them on its dangers and destruction (as Proverbs themes show the end result of certain behaviors).
3. **Parental Modeling:** parents show their children how they deal with their own heart idols through example (Matt 7:1-5), leading the child to see parents as fellow sinners in need of God's Gospel of grace.

Keeping a prayer notebook for the child is a good tool to increase awareness of Gospel-of-grace methods of change and of self-knowledge (self-centered, heart-idol patterns that constantly re-occur).

2. General discipleship & teaching texts using father-child OR mother-child metaphor indicate that all texts on authority-submission roles will have applications to parenting.

Like in church leadership, one must be able to manage own children with dignity (, so in marriage or parenting, attitude of leader/authority figure is to be a servant not a master/Lord, leading by humility, motivate to Christ-likeness, using gentleness to correct (Gal 6:1; 2 Tim 2:24-26; 1 Pet 5:1-4). So Bible texts on church leadership generally apply to skills and attitudes necessary for parenting.

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3. Family examples in the Bible

4. General Christian life goals for all Christians

5. God as Father to his people who are 'natural' (Jew) or adopted (Gentile) children:

The archetypal heavenly pattern is shadowed in earthly reflections, yet as we look at the earthly models, we must always see the earthly as transitional, while the heavenly is the real, substantial, archetypal, and eternal.

Example: temple in heaven is reflected in earthly temple; Heavenly atonement by the blood of Christ in the heavenly holy of holies required by the holiness & justice of God is reflected in Jewish laws regarding blood sacrifice for relating to God.

^{ESV} Hebrews 8:5 They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain."

Example: Heavenly atonement by the blood of Christ in the heavenly holy of holies required by the holiness & justice of God is reflected in Jewish laws regarding blood sacrifice for relating to God.

^{ESV} Hebrews 10:1 For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.

Example: Heavenly relationship to Christ brings joy, celebration & thanksgiving, worship, rest; Ceremonial laws about food, drink, festivals, Sabbaths are shadows of that enduring heavenly relationship to Christ

^{ESV} Colossians 2:16 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. ¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. ²⁶ the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints.

^{ESV} Romans 8:14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but *you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"* ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are *children of God*, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs--*heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ*, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

^{ESV} Hebrews 12:6 For *the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.* ⁷ It is for discipline that you have to endure. *God is treating you as sons.* For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸ If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹ Besides this, we have had earthly *fathers who disciplined us* and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?

^{ESV} 2 Corinthians 6:17 Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, ¹⁸ and *I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me*, says the Lord Almighty."

^{ESV} 1 John 3:1 See what kind of *love the Father has given to us*, that we should *be called children of God*; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.