

INTRODUCTION

“Oh no, here we go again. Another book about how to raise my kids. Haven’t I read enough of those?” These may be your thoughts as you begin to read yet another entry in the vast sea of parenting literature.

You've heard all the parenting advice, gone to the seminars, watched the videos; everybody has the answers, but nothing works. And as you look around, all of the parents that you know are having the same problems. Why?

As our American society moves from one generation to the next, we are slowly but certainly losing ground. There are countless numbers of kids in this country and throughout the world that have no hope, and therefore no future. They lack the understanding of right and wrong, the knowledge of absolute truth, and the reason and purpose for their lives. And yet these kids know that they are missing something. They know and they want the answers. Who will give them those answers?

The intellectuals and “talking heads” claim a variety of reasons for the troubles with our kids. Some claim it is the economic disparities between urban and suburban communities. Others believe that it is the fault of a failing educational system. From politicians to pastors, doctors to psychologists, there are many opinions given as to the reason for our plight. Unfortunately most are wrong, and therefore the solutions they offer are wrong as well.

I used to think that I could change the world, but experience and time have taught me that I can’t. The best I can do is help one person at a time as the Lord puts them in my path. That is the purpose of this book. To help anyone who might be willing to avail himself of it.

But what makes this book different?

Well, most of the parenting resources that have been made available in the last few decades have been written from one of two points of view. The first is the post-modern point of view that operates on the belief that there are no absolutes. This mindset leads to the philosophy that parents are not teachers, disciplinarians, and guides; they are merely care-givers whose sole purpose is to feed and clothe. This philosophy encourages parents to allow their children to develop on their own, to allow nature to take its

course.

The second point of view is the Puritan one. This is where the parents are instructed to control and protect every aspect of the child's life, down to the last minute detail. This philosophy leads to legalism and micro-management, and can be just as destructive as the post-modern view. Both of these view points are extreme and harmful and, like most things in life, the truth is somewhere in between.

This book endeavors to express that truth and thereby help one parent at a time. My message to parents has been constant for the last twenty years; parents have seen great success when believing and implementing it. But the glory goes to God, not me; for He has done the work.

I would encourage you to read through to the end, even when it becomes uncomfortable. After you're done reading, implement it -- even when it gets very hard. If you're willing to do so, I promise you will see positive results.

May God bless you and your family, and may your children grow up to be adults who love and serve Him.

Chapter 1 – A Firm Foundation

Growing up in a strict Catholic family during the 1970s was a very interesting and life-shaping experience. The existence of God and the implications thereof were instilled in me at a very young age. Those ideas were reinforced as I entered eight years of Catholic education, and although my siblings and I still laugh heartily over our parochial memories, it was an education that laid a very firm foundation.

I remember the nuns and priests instructing us in the catechism. The first time I was taught about the creation account in Genesis, my first grade teacher spoke her words as a matter of fact. There were no apologies, no words of self defense, not even an admission that her thoughts and ideas might possibly be wrong. She knew the truth and spoke it. She was firm in teaching us, yet at the same time she was not harsh or arrogant; she was never “in our face” so to speak.

The belief in creation was part of her life and so her viewpoint and outlook on everything else was within its context. That firm foundation of God and creation was instrumental in my development, as well as my eventual conversion to Christ as a young adult.

We all Have a Core

Just like my first grade teacher, every person has a core set of beliefs that governs his thoughts, decisions, and actions. Therefore, we must begin at this core. Furthermore, if you desire to find the solutions to your parenting problems two fundamental truths must find a home in your core beliefs:

- there is an eternal God who created you
- God has provided all the information and example you need for this life

If your core beliefs don't include these two, then they are flawed. There's no polite way to put it.

As a result, everything you think, do, and say will be based on a flawed premise and any advice given to you will be of no value. If you're in this position, I would encourage you to close this book, find a Christian Bible, and read the Gospel of Mark. Seek the Lord and ask Him to show you the

truth -- He will. After you get that settled, then come back here and continue.

If you do believe these two fundamental truths, then you know that the source of information and example God has provided is His Word.

All of Psalm 119 testifies of the necessity of His Word in our lives; Prov. 30:5 tells us that His Word is a shield and is pure; Isaiah 8:10 declares that His Word will remain forever. I could continue with a lengthy list of verses, but I think you get the point.

Admittedly, this is an unpopular belief in our modern society -- but it is the truth. The world is filled with doubters, and sadly there are many even within the Christian church. If parents do not believe in the infallibility of God's Word, then they will not submit to its authority. If they will not submit to its authority, then they are left to their own knowledge as they attempt to raise their children.

History is proof that obedience to Biblical precepts will result in properly-trained children, and vice versa. In the United States we can clearly see throughout the last fifty years or so that we have gradually drifted from our Biblical heritage, and in so doing, we are heading down the path of destruction.

Proof in the Results

My wife and I raised our kids according to what the Scriptures told us and, as a result, we have seen God's hand working in their lives. At the time of this writing we have Alex (age 23), Cati (age 22), and Allison (age 18), and we are thankful for the blessing they are to us.

We are very proud parents, but not because of what we have created. Rather, we see the Lord has been working in them, molding and making them according to His pleasure. And the neat thing about it is watching them respond to Him; they have all developed their own relationship with Jesus. That's what it is all about.

Within our sphere of influence, my family is often held up as an example of a model one. While this may seem like a good thing, there is a troubling aspect to having this reputation.

For reasons that I cannot explain, many people think that the character and qualities my kids demonstrate are things that they were born with. I have heard far too many people say my kids were born with a compliant will and that's why they behave. Or they are just naturally smart, so that's why they do well in school. I can assure you however, that this could not be further from the truth.

As much as we love our kids, Ellen and I know full well they were born sinners just like the rest of us. They had their moments of rebellion, willful disobedience, laziness, foolishness, etc. But as they grew older these moments become less frequent and they became more like the adults they are now.

Make no mistake about it though, what others see in my kids is not due to my great skills as a parent. As I said earlier, all of the glory goes to God. All I have done is obey Him. He has been faithful in keeping His promises. That is what others see in our kids, whether or not they know it.