

Our beliefs about parenting are very important. They shape our passion, attitudes, motivation, and ability to persevere over the years. There is a temptation in parenting to look for the quick fix. If someone would just tell us what to do in each situation, we would be very satisfied. We all enjoy hearing practical ideas on parenting, but to parent successfully, we must wrestle through our beliefs in these matters. Continue to grapple with me through one more specific belief before we get into some of the practicals of parenting. One of the most important beliefs we must grasp as parents is that our parenting makes a difference.

## Following Our Father

I suppose that in an ideal world we'd all come from perfect families, with perfect kids, perfect parents, and perfect pets. When it came time to be a parent you could just look back to your own childhood and follow the example of your own father and mother. And when you weren't sure what to do you could just call them up for advice. But we don't live in an ideal world, do we?

So who's your daddy now? Who are you going to look to for parenting advice?

The answer is that God is your daddy. He is your heavenly Father, and He created you. He also created your children, and has a great interest in your life and that of your family. God wants to help you. He wants to see your kids do well in life. In fact, did you know that one of the reasons your heavenly Father created marriage and made you one with your spouse was because "He was seeking godly offspring" (Malachi 2:15)? That doesn't mean that He wants all of your kids to be preachers. When He says He wants them to be godly, it means that He wants them to be true to Him, to have a heart and passion for Him, and to be men and women of character. He wants them to be more than just good kids; He wants them to be described as "godly"!

That's what you would like too, isn't it? You want godly kids, and God desires the same thing. He created you, He created your kids, and He knows what it takes to raise your children well. In James 1:5 it says, "But if any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it. He is generous and enjoys giving to all people, so He will give you wisdom." (NCV)

God has the wisdom you need; now you just need to get it from Him. Here are a couple of different ways to do that:

1) **Pray for your kids.**

The verse that we just read says that we need to ask God for wisdom. We ask by telling Him that we lack the wisdom we need to raise our kids well, and we ask Him to lead us. We can also ask by bringing specific situations to God in prayer, and then asking Him to give us wisdom in those situations. When little Johnnie leaves his books at school and they get stolen, should you buy him new books, make him buy his own books, or make him go without? The answer is easy...you should pray. Ask God to give you wisdom as to how to best use this event in Johnnie's life to teach him responsibility, without sacrificing his education in the process. Give it time. God will give you a great response.

*Psalms 127:1 Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.*

Remember, we are dependent upon God for success. Who is building your house? One way to measure whether you are trusting in God or in your own strength is to examine your prayer life. I know that may hurt, but we need to be honest with ourselves. Are we really seeking God for our families? We desperately need to pray for our kids!

2) **Study the Bible.**

The clearest way to know what God thinks is by looking at what God has already told you. Many of the passages related directly to parenting will be drawn out in this book, but it goes far beyond that. Not only does the Bible tell us how to parent, but how to live. It describes exactly what a Christian's life should look like, and that is the target we should be aiming for. We are raising our kids to

be the godly men and women of character that the Bible describes.

God is your Father and advisor in parenting. He can lead you through prayer, the Word, and advice from other God-follower. Your confidence level in parenting rests on the foundation of your parenting. If your foundation is in God and in parenting His ways, then you can be confident that what you build upon that foundation will last.

*Getting Advice*

You may have caught an interesting article in the news from September of 2004. During a hurricane in Florida, a group of people were in an office building riding out the storm. While they were trapped inside, a 54-year-old man ordered his pit bulls to attack these helpless people with the words, "Go get them!" One woman was bitten on the leg and a man suffered deep bites to his face and throat. After the initial attacks, they had to hide in their offices for an hour since the police were busy with hurricane-related activity. No motive was given for the attacks. The craziest part of the story was that this guy was a mental health counselor who treated anger management problems and addictions. His past arrests included aggravated assault with a weapon, domestic violence, and sexual assault. Now doesn't that sound like the kind of guy you'd like to visit for your anger issues? You'd sure want to be careful not to tick him off from the counseling couch!

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