

Grace-Based Parenting: Six lessons for raising godly kids from many mistakes, a few successes, and a whole lot of grace

Recommended Reading:

- *Abigail Shrier, Bad Therapy: Why the Kids Aren't Growing Up*
- *Jonathan Haidt, The Anxious Generation*
- *Jean Twenge, Generations*
- *Paul Tripp, Parenting*
- *Tedd & Margy Tripp, Instructing a Child's Heart*
- *Tedd Tripp, Shepherding a Child's Heart*



Six Lessons for Raising Godly Children

1. Delight in God together. (Psalm 19:1-11; 5:7,11; Hebrews 10:24-25)

- How do you see delight in the psalm? What does he appear to be doing in v.1-6? How would he know that God's instructions are right and wise (experience)? Given that the psalms are for corporate worship, how is he teaching others to delight in God? How is he showing them that God is more satisfying than other things in the world?
- What is an activity where you could teach your child to delight in God?
 - a. Read the Bible and pray together.
 - b. Make God a priority in your daily conversations.
 - c. Go to church together every week.

2. Be present. (Deuteronomy 6:5-9)

- a. Have dinner together at the table every night.
- b. When you get home plug your devices in and don't unplug them until morning.

3. **Teach authority.** (Ephesians 6:1-4; Hebrews 12:5-11) Authority provides the best structure for your child to thrive.
 - a. Be the authority and you will gain much more than a friend in the end. Teach them that freedom comes from responsibility and accountability.
 - b. Discipline is not abuse. Abuse is not discipline. The difference is severity, intent, emotion, often method, etc.
 - c. Show that you are under authority too by repenting to your kids when they see you sin.
4. **Encourage resilience.** (1 Peter 4:12; Romans 5:3-4) While prolonged stress is harmful, acute periods of stress are critical in a child's development. Let your children have adventures and make mistakes while stakes are still low.
 - a. Children are resilient. Guide them, guard them, but don't shelter them. Optimism and a lack of anxiety are directly tied to resilience.
 - b. Don't encourage rumination on your child's feelings. Listen, love, and then offer action as a remedy. Children can handle rejection, being picked last, etc
5. **Don't let others raise your child.** (2 Timothy 1:5; Proverbs 1:8-19) Children under the age of 16 are extremely impressionable. Guard closely those you allow to influence them.
 - a. Be careful about sleepovers.
 - b. Delay giving your child a smartphone and social media until high school.
6. **Limit screen time.**
 - a. Supervise less in the physical world and much more in the virtual world.
 - b. Encourage physical and relational activity.
 - c. No screens in the bedroom.

Behaviorism vs. Grace-Based Parenting

Grace is directed at the heart. Godly parenting understands that if we engage in behaviorism parenting, we are teaching our children law-based acceptance, rather than grace-based acceptance.

So, how do we parent our children in such a way that would produce the fruit of grace – good works in their lives?

Behaviorism parenting connects the action to a consequence.

Grace-based parenting connects the action to relationship.

Behaviorism parenting is often motivated by frustration and parent-centered issues.

Grace-based parenting is motivated by gospel-centered realities.

2 Timothy 3:1-3, 10, 16-17

5 C's of Grace-based Parenting:

1. **Appeal to the Conscience**
 - a. Why did they do what they did? What was going on in their heart?
 - b. How did it make the other person feel?
 - c. How does it make God feel?
 - d. What should we do now?
2. **Communication**
 - a. Deuteronomy 6:5-9
 - b. Proverbs 4
 - c. Communicate attitudes of the heart as rules, not actions. - Was that loving? Vs No hitting!
 - d. Start with training them in who God is and bringing our hearts and lives in line with God
3. **Correction**
 - a. Age appropriate
 - b. Never in anger
 - c. Communicating that the heart behind their action is the main issue, not the behavior itself
 - d. Rewards/Punishments of Behaviorism vs. Biblical Sowing and Reaping Principles
4. **Consistency**
 - a. Parenting is not a series of unrelated corrective encounters, but a life-long connected process.
 - b. Avoid parental hypocrisy
 - c. Avoid making your children weathermen

Rewards/Punishments of Behaviorism	Biblical Sowing & Reaping Principles
<p>Goal: Consequences are an external attempt to change behavior-what will appeal to the child enough to be a motivator or sting enough to be a deterrent. Without an ethical or moral foundation, we have a changing standard. Children grow bitter and feel justified in rebellion. Behavioristic rewards develop a sense of rights (I deserve...) in a child. Random punishments that reflect the caprice and mood of the parent cause the root of bitterness and rebellion to grow and flourish.</p>	<p>Goal: Consequences only serve to underscore the principles and absolutes of Scripture with temporal outcomes. The fixed foundation of God's truth is the basis for morality and ethics.</p> <p>"Thus saith the Lord" is sufficient reason for avoiding sin and striving for good.</p> <p>Consequences are rooted in the principles and absolutes of Scripture and the provision of saving and sanctifying grace to reflect the covenant God has established with man for either blessing or cursing.</p> <p>Training appeals to a higher standard that children can anticipate because it is outside human fickleness outside our preference or the whim of the moment.</p> <p>Consequences enable our joyful obedience to our Savior. The gospel shines with hope in the face of our sin and inability.</p> <p>There is hope!</p>
<p>Consequences are generally unrelated to behavior. Popular behavioristic tactics such as time out, grounding and loss of stuff do not bear out biblical truth all by themselves. They simply serve as power plays to prove our power of persuasion through deprivation of their stuff and privileges. This plants seeds of rebellion in a child's already defiant heart.</p>	<p>Consequences should be related as closely as possible to the occasion of discipline.</p> <p>Irresponsibility should result in loss of privilege or restitution for sin. Our goal in the choice of consequence is to display the reality of life in God's world. God has created and he sustains all things by the Word of his power. He has established law that brings glory to himself and safety and protection to his creatures. Refusal to live in his ways in his world results in disaster both in time and eternity.</p>
<p>Consequences are event oriented and temporary. They are focused on changing behavior, getting the problem solved so that life can go on uninterrupted.</p>	<p>Consequences are process oriented. They are honestly goal directed for the child's eternal benefit so that future temptations will be a reminder of godly lessons learned in previous heart skirmishes.</p>
<p>Consequences are concerned with controlling and constraining behavior for wrong motives-for looks, convenience and pride.</p>	<p>Consequences are concerned with fruit that endures and builds character and godly values for use in God's kingdom. God disciplines his people to produce holiness in them.</p>
<p>Consequences reflect the authorities' personal standards and goals.</p>	<p>Consequences reflect the Law of God as the standard for morality and ethics, and the path of blessing, peace, hope and restoration.</p>

From ***Instructing a Child's Heart*** by Tedd & Margy Tripp, p.67-69.

Roadmap For Raising Godly Children in the Digital Age

Age	Developmental Issues	Behavioral Goals	Spiritual Goals	Parental Issues	Responsibilities & Freedoms
2-5 (Early Childhood) <i>Proverbs 9:10; Psalm 139:14</i>	Age of foundations. Able to think about concrete things in one-dimensional ways. Full dependence (10).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self-discipline 2. Sympathy 3. Living under authority 	Introducing biblical concepts: – God, sin, grace	Structure, boundaries, and rules. Limit screentime. Encourage interaction with the physical world. Teach authority through loving corporal punishment.	Almost none.
6-9 (Late Childhood) <i>Deuteronomy 6:5-9</i>	Age of exploration. Able to think logically in multi-dimensional ways. Exploratory independence (8).	<p>Begin navigating interpersonal issues on their own.</p> <p>Instead of ruminating on feelings, encourage them with action instead.</p>	Hide God's Word in their heart. Teach them the disciplines of Bible reading, prayer, and scripture memory. Give them a solid understanding of biblical stories.	Don't hover. Encourage some opportunities for independent problem solving. Discipline is decreasingly physical and increasingly a loss of freedoms (grounding, etc).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adventures without parental supervision – at or near home. 2. Responsibilities (chores) with accountability
10-12 (Early Adolescence) <i>Psalm 34:8</i>	Age of formation. Able to think abstractly. Increasing independence (6)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Early ethical reasoning. 2. Sympathy that leads to self-sacrifice and active care for others. 3. Patterns of self-discipline. 	Personal application of biblical truths. Personal profession of faith.	Freedom comes with responsibility and accountability. Resist the urge to give your child a smartphone or social media until high school. Discipline is accompanied with reasoning.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sitting in "big" church. 2. Serving in church. 3. Freedom to spend time without adult supervision away from home.

Age	Developmental Issues	Behavioral Goals	Spiritual Goals	Parental Issues	Responsibilities & Freedoms
13-15 (Late Adolescence) <i>1 Corinthians 13:11</i>	Age of acceptance. Burgeoning independence (4). Teen years are not extended childhood, but preparation for adulthood.	Relationships with older Christians. Relationships with the opposite sex. Increasing acceptance of responsibilities.	Personal faith in Jesus Christ evidenced by a deepening discipleship. Application of biblical truths to more complex questions and theological, ethical, and cultural issues. Teach them to give of their finances sacrificially to God.	Begin thoughtfully helping your child to begin transitioning from seeing themselves as under their parents' authority to being under God's authority.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opposite sex relationships with parental oversight (texting with parental accessibility; telephone or video chatting not in bedroom or late at night; controlled events (movies, bowling, skating, etc). 2. Get a paying job. 3. Dumb phone
16-17 (Early Adulthood) <i>Titus 2:4-8</i>	Age of responsibility. Near independence (2). Preparing for adulthood. Responsibilities and freedoms should increasingly reflect those of adulthood.	Responsibility Accountability Empathy Self-sacrifice	Begin to take the Great Commission personally serious. Ownership of their own faith.	Parental role becomes less authoritative with responsibility and accountability, and more advisory. Adulthood with training wheels.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Smartphone 2. Social media. 3. Driver's license. 4. Dating with parental check-ins.
18+ (Adulthood) <i>Joshua 1:7</i>	Age of independence. Complete independence (0) – the ability to make adult decisions and face adult consequences.	This adult should be able to live independently from parents.	Self-motivated involvement in church and personal spiritual disciplines.	Our role moves from oversight to counselor. If they are still home or overly dependent on you, without a plan they are moving toward (graduate school – in a degree that makes sense; moving forward in a career; saving for a home, etc), force the issue.	They are completely responsible. You are a resource.