

Six mistakes Christian parents can't afford.



Parenting, especially Christian Parenting is not easy. In Fifty years of working with inner city children and their families the number one problem is clearly that all parents are very very busy. This business, preoccupation with hundreds of daily problems, makes it easy to miss a beat with our children. Following is my short list of things we can't afford to overlook.

1. Trying to parent without God. God can't do through us what he does not first do in us. The first step to being a Christian parent is a personal relationship with Christ. Our children will see the Holy Spirit in us...trust it...and respect it. Don't forget to put on Christ fresh each morning. It will make each day go better.

2. Putting rules over relationship. Almost the entire Old Testament is about rules. Almost the entire New Testament is about relationship. Rules and discipline are important but without love a child is likely to become addicted to the discipline...getting attention the only way he knows... by misbehaving. Good parents must tell their children what not to do...GREAT PARENTS/GODLY PARENTS help them find something to do and do it with them.

3. Trying to parent without goals. Most of us parent from necessity to urgency, so mired down in what must be done that we lose track of where we are going...what we and our children are missing. The one great hope for most of us is a clear set of goals. Personally we like God's goals for his children.

- ◆ **That my children learn to trust and enjoy me.**
- ◆ **That my children learn to love one another.**
- ◆ **That my children learn right from wrong.**
- ◆ **That my children find their role as workers serving God.**
- ◆ **That my children are leaders and teachers...not followers.**
- ◆ Add a few of your own and share them with your children,

The power of goals is that they help us see our children as they could be rather than as they are. Parents who AIM at nothing are almost sure to hit the mark. Share your goals for your children with them...then share your faith that God will help them hit that mark.

4. Letting the sun go down on our anger (Giving the Devil a foothold...Eph. 4:27). This verse is

heartily confirmed by Dr. Ross Campbell, winner of the president's award in pediatrics who emphatically adds: " the single greatest danger to a child's future is his own anger". Various chapters in this fine book mention the increased risk of prison, divorce, poverty and lifelong mental problems. (One statistic we would like to add is: "Violent television shows have virtually no effect on an emotionally healthy child. The angry child however is over 10,000 times as likely to act out the violence he SEES.) If your library does not have a copy of Dr. Campbell's book "Kids in Danger." ask them to get one for you. One thing to remember next time you tell your child "Talk don't Hit" is that it won't work if he has no one to talk to...no one to help him learn self control... no one to help him solve the problem that made or continue to make him angry. When your child is angry go to him...not away from him. Have him ask six people what they do when they get angry. Talk with him...or her. The actual statistic is that we tell our boys "No" ten times as often as our girls...which they well my NEED being on the average much more adventurous than the average girl. The problem according to Harvard University is that when we do tell our boys "No" it is WITHOUT the comfort and explanations we give our girls.

5. Trying to parent without DAILY Bible verses. God's word is meant to comfort, correct, encourage, protect and much much more. Bible verses are meant to be USED. Put a bowl somewhere in your home and when your children have a need offer them a Bible verse. Our favorite website with free printable verses on over 50 topics in any language in the world is www.bibleparent.com.

6. Raising Children who are more dependent on you than on God. Part of love is protecting a child...keeping them under your umbrella and safe. A larger part of love is giving them umbrella's of their own...making prayer a HABIT they learn early in life. A good starting place is the Lord's Prayer. A great website hosted by The Christian Child Care Coalition is www.teachustoprayer.com. Even children with TWO earthly parents child NEED their FATHER IN HEAVEN. The child of divorce has an even greater need. Make DAILY prayer a childhood memory your children will carry with them all their lives.

The one thing busy parents NEED MOST is REMINDERS. Post this article somewhere in your home or cut it into the six sections and keep the sections in a bowl by your bed or the kitchen table. Be a doer...not just a hearer...don't let things slip.

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