

GOD'S DESIGN FOR MEN & WOMEN:

IN THE HOME AND IN THE CHURCH

CLASS 3: WHAT ARE THE PRIORITIES OF THE PARENTS?

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

- The goal of this series is to understand what the Bible has to say about men and women in general. Not necessarily a new controversy, but with the rise of transgenderism, homosexuality, and many other gender confusing ideologies, it is important for the Christian to know where the Bible stands.
- Before getting to the Scriptures, we are going to start with how the world views men and women. We are going to discuss the world's attack on gender and God's original design.
- Overall, want to understand what the world sees as men's and women's differences, similarities, and then we are going to find out what the Bible has to say.
- After defining men and women from a biblical viewpoint, the rest of the classes are dedicated to viewing men and women and their respective roles.
- We are going to look at what a biblical family is, how a biblical family can influence the world around them and also what priorities of parents should be in their home.
- Then the final few classes will look at what the Bible has to say specifically regarding men's and women's distinct roles, both within the church and home.
- Here is schedule for the upcoming lessons:
 - Class 1: Introduction to the series and what the World and Bible say about men and women.
 - Class 2: What is the biblical family? How can a biblical family influence society?
 - **Class 3: What are the priorities of parents?**
 - Class 4: What are some of the roles of men in the home?
 - Class 5: What are some priorities of a husband with his wife?
 - Class 6: What are some of the roles of men in the church?
 - Class 7: What are some of the roles of women in the home?
 - Class 8: What are some of the roles of women in the church?

INTRODUCTION

- It is common for families to just “drift” through life, hoping that their children grow up and add something to society one day.
- Speaking of parenting teenagers, Paul Tripp says “They [parents] are told to expect the worst and to be thankful if they come out of the valley sane, with their teenager alive and their family intact.”¹
- While Tripp is speaking about parenting teenagers, this is the mindset that we can fall into for our single life, our married life and our parenting.
- Our hope should not be just to come out alive and intact, our hope should be for a family and life which honors Christ, glorifies God and leaves a lasting heritage for others to follow.
- When we speak of priorities in the family, we are not necessarily speaking of roles in the family.
- While each spouse is going to have their unique role in the family, the couple together should have priorities which are not unique to them individually but those which they both are striving for in their family.
 - We are going to discuss roles in the family in the next few classes.
- The point is that for the overall family to function (if the family includes children or not) the husband and wife must be together in their goals, focus, priorities and the way they are going to attain such things.
- While you may have put goals in place for your family, do you have a plan in place to achieve them? Do you know why and how you are striving to meet the goals that you have determined are best?
- This class is going to cover both families with and without children.
- Those families without children must still strive for unity but their overall responsibility is going to look different.
- If you are not putting things in place without children, it most likely will not start after you have them.
- For families with children, your responsibilities are going to be much broader as you are going to be taking care of your children.
- What is the same for both families with and without kids is that the husband and wife must be together.
- They must not have two separate agendas for their marriage, nor can they live two seemingly separate lives.
- What we are going to look at this morning is all about the duties of parents. This is universal for all parents of all kids. This is where you need to be on the same page as your spouse.
- We are going to discuss what it means to nurture and admonish your children, what it means to speak to their heart, and the importance of knowing what season or stage of life you and your children are in.

¹ Paul Tripp, *Age of Opportunity A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens*, rev. and exp., (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2022), 13.
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THE PARENTS' DUTY

- As we start with the duty of parents, we are going to look at what disciplines should be taught in the home by both the mother and the father.
- Often times it is the mother who spends the majority of time with the kids, so it is important that she is setting the spiritual and practical expectations for the children.
- The father is of equal importance as he disciplines his wife and kids so that they are all going in the same direction spiritually.
- Overall, there should be an attitude and atmosphere of teamwork in the house. One of the most important attributes to exhibit to your kids is that of cooperation with one another.

A brief word to the parents.

- “It is a waste of time for us to think about strategies for parenting our teens without first examining ourselves.”²
- Once again, while Tripp is talking to parents of teens, it is vital for *all* parents to start with this easy to miss concept. We need to make sure that we, as parents, are right before God.
- If we have other idols or desires in our hearts, they are going to be ruling us and we are not going to parent and shepherd our children the way the Lord desires.
- If our hope is for well behaved children, then our parenting strategies are going to reflect. Our emphasis will be on behavior.
- If our hope is that we have peace in the home, then we are going to do all we can to make sure that our kids do not fight with one another.
- While these goals, and others, are not necessarily bad, they cannot be the ruling desire in our hearts.
- They actually fall short of where our parenting should be focused on.
- As Christian parents, while we desire well behaved kids and peace in the home, we know that is a fruit of something that is deeper.
- We know that our aim should be, not for the behavior, but for the heart.
- If the heart is changed by the power of Christ through the gospel, then the behavior is going to follow after.
- While you nor your child is perfect, as Christians you are both in the process of sanctification as the Word of God is changing your heart.
- As your hearts are changed more into the image of Christ, so your actions will be changed as well.

² Tripp, 27.

Aim for your child's heart.

- Our kids, just like us, need the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is vital to remember that your kids, before the Lord graciously saves them, are operating by their sinful nature.
- This does not mean that parents do not give them biblical instruction, but it does mean that parents must remember that the natural man, the unsaved person, cannot understand spiritual things (1 Cor 2:14).
 - As parents, our greatest desire is to see our kids walking with the Lord. We want to see them shielded from all this world has to offer and keep their eyes fully fixed upon the Lord.
 - That is why it is important that our target is the heart of our children.
- While we are correcting behavior in our kids, especially when they are younger, they need to have their hearts addressed.
 - Early on much of the correction for your child is going to just be don't do that but rather do this instead.
 - As toddlers, they are not going to fully understand their hearts, this does not mean you do not explain it to them, but it does mean you cannot expect them to grasp it.
 - This is why in the early stages it is simply behavior focused. When your kids are old enough to understand their sinful hearts and need for a Savior, then you start talking about that.
- It is the duty of the parents to correct their kids, but also to point out that they need a new heart. Parents are responsible for disciplining their children, but they are also responsible for giving them hope.
- Jesus says in **Mark 7:20-23** “**That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.**”
- Your children need to know that you are not just trying to get them to change their behavior so that life will be easier. You know that they need a new heart, they need to be born again, they need the gospel.
- All families have rules, some more than others. The question is not *do you have rules...* the question is *why do you have the rules that you do?* Does every person in your family know why they can or can't do something?
- Is it just because mom or dad says so...or is there something in that rule that is going to help point them to Christ?
 - Once again, there are times when your children simply need to obey because God has given you the authority over them (Eph 6:1).
 - But, as parents you do not want to abuse or confuse that authority.

- Be able to “back-up” your rules and restrictions with Bible verses.
- Take your children through the Scriptures so that they can see that your standards are not arbitrary, but they are based on God’s Word.
- As you train them how to read and apply God’s Word early in their life, you are setting them up for success as they mature and eventually leave the house on their own.

Nurture and admonition

- “Children have the easy role in the family. All they have to do is obey their parents. The parents’ duty is what is really hard. They have to set a good example, be diligent teachers, give regular correction, and provide consistent discipline—all without frustrating their kids in the process.”³
- Our children cannot reach maturity on their own, but they need the nurture and admonition of their parents.
 - As parents, we must commit ourselves to being leading and shepherding our children.
- Parents must play an active role in their children’s life. There is no room for parents who simply decide to let the “system” or someone else raise their child.
- There are no more important people in the lives of your children than you. From their birth until you are no longer around, if you build a strong relationship with your children they will desire a relationship with you.
- One of the reasons you are to be intimately involved in your child’s life is for proper discipline.
 - **Proverbs 29:15 “The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.”**
- The Bible is clear, a child that is not disciplined will bring shame to his mother.
- The command to parents in **Ephesians 6:4 “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”**
- Parents are not to provoke their children to anger. It is a parent’s duty not to provoke your children.
 - Parents should not do things with the explicit intention of getting their children angry.
 - Parents are going to anger their children as they give them rules and discipline. While they may not know or articulate it, they actually do want boundaries. But, in their sinful nature, they are going to rebel against all forms of authority...at least in the beginning.
 - It is when parents are intentionally doing and saying things to their children to get a reaction out of them. It is withholding something from them for no reason other than you can and it will cause them to become angry.

³ John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family: God’s Design for Your Family* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Publishers, 2005), 105.

- Parents should not act like this towards their children. Not only is it sinful, going directly against the Bible, but it does no good for the child.
- So, what do your children need?
 - The discipline and instruction of the Lord. Interesting correlation between what Paul is commanding and what Jesus commanded.
 - **Matthew 28:19-20** “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”
 - We, as Christians, are to make disciples by teaching them to observe (to obey, to guard) what Christ taught. As we are disciplining our children, they are learning by instruction which aims at increasing their virtue.
 - When we instruct our children, we are admonishing them, warning them that the way they are on is a way to destruction.
 - We teach either by experience or knowledge, but we must speak into their lives.
- In order to really understand what our children need, we must be part of their lives.
- We must take interest in what interests them, they must see that we desire a real relationship with them.
 - This is not about being your child’s friend, though that may happen through time. This is about showing love and care to your child so that they know you desire their heart.
 - When this takes place, when your child knows that you love the Lord and them, they are more apt to talk with you, to trust you, and to ultimately follow your instructions.
- We can do nothing fruitful in our children’s lives if we are not part of it.
- “Parenting is so much more than the daily grind of keeping your children in line and getting them to the places they need to go. Bring up your children in the fear and admonition of the Lord, and be mindful of the larger God-sized purpose of glorifying Him in the way you raise them. Endure, persevere, and keep your eyes on Him.”⁴
- For your nurture and admonition to be consistent and filled with love, it must be Biblical.
- Parenting is no easy task, even for Christian parents. It is when parents take their focus away from glorifying God that they start to really feel the pressure.
- Not only do your children need a regular washing of God’s Word in the life, so do you.
- **2 Timothy 3:16-17** “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

⁴ Andreas and Margaret Köstenberger, *Parenting Essentials Equipping Your Children For Life*, (Scotland, GB: Christian Focus Publishing House, 2020), 19.

- God’s Word has all that we need to properly raise our children. It provides *the* guide and grounds for discipline. It gives us the purpose of being parents and how we are to treat our family.
- We should never think that God has left us alone or without any resources for how to handle our family. God has ordained that *you* are a part of *your* family and is working in and through you.
- When we stray from what the Bible says, we should not expect spiritual results. If you are trying to raise your kids by the world’s standards, you are going to have a worldly child.
- While parenting may not seem easy, we can trust that God has given us all that we need in order to raise our children for their good and His glory.

Knowing your season or stage of life with your children.

- As your children grow, they are going to change in how they interact with the world and with you.
- As newborns, we know that our children just need food, sleep, and to be clean and dry. While this seems simple enough, we all know that it is exhausting.
- As your children grow, their needs change. Your kids will always need food, sleep, and to be clean and dry, but their relationship with you and with God will start to develop.
- Things like discipline will be different. When they are young, you never want to allow them to do something that you will end up disciplining them for in the future. While many young children do “cute” things, those same things will get them in trouble when they grow up.
- Consistency is key when dealing with your kids, no matter what stage of life they are in.
 - You may start with spanking and as they get older; it is the loss of a privilege that now affects them the most.
 - They may lose their screen time, maybe it is time with a friend or the loss of a trip they were invited to go on with friends.
 - You must be able to recognize what is going to work best for you and your child.
- Recognizing when your children move into phases of logic and reason is also vitally important.
- Many times, parents are annoyed or angered with their kids when they ask why or seemingly start to push back when they are asked to do something.
- This may be true; they may be acting disrespectful and rebellious. But it is your responsibility to find out if your child is growing their understanding of the world or simply being rebellious.
 - The last thing you should desire is to discipline your children for developing their thinking skills.
- Knowing how to interact with your children, once again, means that you must be present in their lives.
- In order for you to know what stage of life they are in and what is needed, you must have an active role in their life.

- This will prove fruitful, through perhaps not at first, throughout their life. They will know that they always have someone they can call and work through things with.

CONCLUSION

- We talked about the priorities of parenting. The first thing all parents must know is that they too are in need of the grace of God. As parents, we too are prone to sin and wander if not for God's loving grace and mercy towards us.
- Parents must make sure their own hearts are right before God, not perfect, as they parent their children.
- We also discussed that while behavioral change may be desired, our aim must be at the heart. If the hearts of our children are changed by the gospel, then their behavior will follow.
- We also discussed the importance of raising our child by nurturing and admonishing them.
- Finally, it is vitally important to know the season of life you and your children are in so that you are able to properly parent and shepherd them.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- How has parenting changed your view of how God interacts with you?
- What have you been more challenged with in your parenting?
- What are some things that you would have done differently when your children were younger?
- What counsel would you give to young parents that you would have liked to have known?