

PARENTING 101 | TRAINING FOR CHARACTER

SESSION 2: Ages 6-11

March 23, 2025

AIM FOR THE HEART¹

- A. *"But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person."* - **Matt. 15:18**
- B. Behavior is external. But behavior overflows from the heart.
- C. Behavior has a when, what, and why.
 - a. **When** - circumstances in which the behavior occurred
 - b. **What** - the things that were said or done
 - c. **Why** - the internal heart issues that pushed or pulled the specific behavior
 - d. Our goal is to address the "*what*" of their behavior from the "*why*" perspective. We want to help them understand the overflow of the heart.

TRAIN FOR CHARACTER

- A. 0-5 years - **Authority**
 - a. He has come to understand what it means to be under authority. He has learned to obey without challenge, without excuse, without delay. How do you build on that foundation?
- B. 6-11 years - **Character**
 - a. Needs to know what to do in situations you cannot anticipate. He needs biblical wisdom. His conscience must develop.
 - b. Character - "living consistently with who God is and who I am."
 - c. What are character qualities you desire for your child? Dependability, honesty, kindness, consideration, helpfulness, diligence, loyalty, humility, self-control, purity...etc.

¹The Training portion of this outline has been adapted from 2 chapters by Ted Tripp in "Shepherding A Child's Heart": "Childhood Training Objectives" and "Childhood Training Procedures."

TEACH THEM TO LIVE "CORAM DEO"

- A. If we desire to help our kids develop these character qualities, we have to help them see themselves in reference to God.
- B. The reformers used the phrase "Coram Deo" - it means to live before the face of God.
 - a. **Psa 56:13** - *For you have delivered my soul from death, yes, my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of life.*
 - b. Coram Deo means to live all of one's life in the presence of God, under the authority of God, and to the honor and glory of God.
- C. As Christians, we are practicing a life lived before the face of God. As Christian parents, we are helping our kids to understand their lives before the face of God.
 - a. **1 Sam 17:37** - *"And David said, "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!"*
 - b. *"You want to hold out who God is as a basis for making choices about what he should do and be...You must always hold out to your children both their need of Christ's invasive redemptive work and their obligation to repent of their sin and place their faith in Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are not rites of initiation to Christianity. Repentance and faith are the way to relate to God. Repentance and faith are not acts performed one time to become a Christian. They are attitudes of the heart toward ourselves and our sin. Faith is not just the way to get saved; it is the lifeline of Christian living."* - **Tedd Tripp**

CASE STUDIES: INSISTING & SELFISHNESS

- A. Kid grumbling about not getting cheerios.
 - a. **Possible Parental Responses:**
 - i. Enabling - "Ok sweetie, we'll get some for you."
 - ii. Shaming - "how can you complain with so many blessings?"
 - iii. Pacifying - "Ok, you can have some - just stop crying!"
 - b. **What is the "why" in this scenario?**
 - i. Insisting on his own way.

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c. How is he viewing himself in relation to God and others?

- i. Wants to play God, call the shots, have all things go according to his plan.

d. What is the truth about who he is in relation to God and others?

- i. Cheerios are a good thing. But demanding the cheerios when there are none and the parents have already said not right now is putting himself above God and parents and grumbling when not getting his way. God loves him and has given him parents and they will give him good things at the right time. The bible says that God's love does not insist on its own way. That's what is happening - insisting on its own way. And when the demand is not met, grumbling. This is a chance to turn from the sin of insisting on his own way and grumbling and trust the Lord for providing good things at the right time.

B. Kid scraping the last of the strawberry jelly in front of the other kids.

a. Possible Parental Response:

- i. Enabling - "First come, first serve."

b. What is the "why" in this scenario?

- i. Selfishness

c. How is he viewing himself in relation to God and others?

- i. Not thinking of God or others - self-focused.

d. What is the truth about who he is in relation to God and others?

- i. We don't usually want to share and we look out for ourselves - this is selfishness. But God is not like that - he is generous toward us. He can change our hearts to be generous toward others! Let's cut the biscuit in half and share so we can be givers like God.

QUESTIONS

1. Can you identify situations in which you have been tempted to give your child a keepable standard because it made things easier? What would it look like to train their hearts in these situations rather than merely address their behavior?

2. If you were to name 2 character-training objectives for your child, what would they be? What are some scriptures that would help your child see what it looks like to live “Coram Deo” in these areas?

3 PRIORITIES FOR PARENTS²

A. Pray for your children

- a. Remember Psalm 127, “Unless the Lord builds...unless the Lord watches”...unless the Lord convicts and saves.
- b. That Jesus will call them and no one will hinder them from coming.³ (Matt. 19:13-15)
- c. That they will respond in faith to Jesus’s faithful, persistent call. (2 Pet. 3:9)
- d. That they will experience sanctification through the transforming work of the Holy Spirit and will increasingly desire to fulfill the greatest commandments. (Matt. 22:37-39)
- e. That their thoughts will be pure. (Phil. 4:8)

B. Fight for a simple practice of family worship

- a. *“Every family has a god. Every day, young adults leave home with the gods of self-fulfillment, money, leisure, work, or even ministry.”⁴ - William Boekestein*
- b. **Joshua 24:15** *“...But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”*
- c. **Basic structure:** Read - Pray - Sing
 - i. **Be simple**⁵ - Read something simple that matches your kid’s level of understanding (i.e. gospel of John, Psalms, Proverbs). Aim for 5-10 minutes. Play a song or use a device to sing along to a song. Pray out of the text you read or pray a simple prayer for things going on in your family or church life.
 - ii. **Be flexible** - Disruptions happen. Do what you can and entrust it to the Lord!

² This section was adapted from material taken from “Five Priorities for Every Father and Mother” by Brian Chesemore.

³ Adapted from the article “Seven Things to Pray for Your Children” by Jon Bloom.

⁴ “Family Worship 101” by William Boekestein.

⁵ This list was adapted from “Family Worship for Dummies” by Tom Ascol.

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- iii. **Be consistent** - Find the best time that works for your family's season. Reassess occasionally when schedules or seasons change to make this a priority.
- iv. **Be hopeful** - Though it may seem daunting or ineffective at times, the cumulative effect of this grace is wonderful. It exposes kids consistently to the word and the concepts of prayer and faith. It provides a context for conversations about the Lord and provides a springboard to talk about other areas of life. The Lord uses these small moments to shape their hearts and yours, too!

C. Keep your heart amazed at grace

- a. *"In order to have something glorious to transfer to our children, we must first make sure to keep it glorious in our eyes." - **Brian Chesemore***
- b. *"Where the head of a family is lukewarm or worldly, he will send the chill through the whole house; and if any happy exception occur, and one and another surpass him in faithfulness, it will be in spite of his evil example...Where the dad...is a man of faith, of affection, and of zeal, consecrating all his works and life to Christ, it is very rare to find all his household otherwise minded."⁶ - **J.W. Alexander***

⁶ "Thoughts on Family Worship" by J.W. Alexander