

5 Smooth Stones for Effective Parenting

Father's Day!

A young boy was asked to define Father's Day.

This is what he said: It's just like Mother's Day only you don't spend so much. But fatherhood has its rewards as one father discovered.

A father of five children came home with a toy.

He summoned his children and asked which of them should be given the present.

"Who is the most obedient one here?" he asked.

"Who never talks back to Mom?" was a second criteria to qualify for the toy.

"Who does everything that Mom says to do?" was his final question.

There were a few seconds of silence.

Then all of the children said in one accord: "You play with it Daddy!"

It's a huge responsibility to be a father.

Parenting is not for the faint-hearted.

There is always that nagging thought, am I doing it right?

Am I making a difference in my children's lives?

Am I really being effective?

Or am I just blundering my way through my children's lives?

Steve Farrar said, "A godly father is the unseen spiritual submarine who lurks below the surface of every activity of his child's life. A man who wears the full armor of God and with that armor goes to warfare on his knees for his children is a force to be reckoned with. We cannot be with our children 24 hours a day but through our prayers we have the ability to affect situations even when we are not physically present. You may be undetected but that does not mean you are ineffective." (Steve Farrar, *Standing Tall*, page 199)

And that is what we want to look at this morning.

There are several ways we can know that we are being effective.

Effectiveness may not always be evident.

And **effectiveness is never accidental.**

There are lessons we can teach our children about life.

These are lessons in part from "Effective Parenting in a Defective World" by Chip Ingram.

But we also find them in our Scripture this morning (read)

These are life lessons that can be passed on any time.

The sooner in life these lessons are learned the better.

But it is never too late to make this investment.

I Suffering Well is one of the life lessons to instill into your children.

Peter mentions suffering in his epistle at least 20 times (vs. 12-13).

He says that suffering and struggle are normal experiences in life.

There is nothing strange about it.

Suffering was part of Jesus' life.

If He suffered, His disciples will also suffer.

But suffering is global, whether a follower of Jesus or not.

Life is hard and challenging and filled with disappointment.

Eliminating suffering from a child's life creates unrealistic expectations.

Without suffering a child develops a lop-sided understanding of life.

Life is not always in balance and it is not always fair.

A bigger danger of preventing suffering is it distorts our understanding of God.

It is in suffering that we learn God is good and He is sovereign.

We need to teach our children to suffer well.

And we need to teach that **not all suffering is beneficial.**

To suffer for doing wrong is not a positive thing.

But when we suffer for doing the right thing we become stronger.

Peter talks about the fiery ordeal.

Suffering develops a character that reflects Jesus.

Suffering for doing what is right results in blessing.

There is no shame in suffering for doing what is right.

And we will recognize that God is our faithful Creator.

Look at what Peter wrote in 2:19-23 (read).

If you want your children to be Christ-like, teach them about suffering.

Let them know that suffering will come.

They can choose why and how they will suffer.

Biblical suffering produces joy.

And they will be an inspiration to others.

Don't insulate your children from suffering.

Teach them that suffering well produces a depth of character.

"Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same thought, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer by human passions but by the will of God." (1 Peter 4:1-2)

II Working Well is a second life lesson to teach children (1 Peter 5:2-4).

Our children's highest calling in life is to work unto the Lord.

A child who has everything given to them will feel entitled.

Peter says God calls us to care for what He places around us.

"Tend the flock of God that is your charge."

Peter tells us the attitude we are to have as we work unto the Lord.

"Willingly and eagerly".

I think we have all heard grumbling from a child in our life time.

A chore is assigned and the complaints flow.

They might do the work but they are not working well.

The job might get done but the attitude is all wrong.

Peter writes that work is a calling not a job.

"Not for shameful gain".

We don't work to make money.

Our goal in work should never be to make lots of money.

Nor do we work to feel happy or good about ourselves.

We work because God has commissioned us to work.

We were created to work

All work that we do is sacred.

If children hear us complain about the job, God is pushed out.

All work flows from God's purpose for us.

All our work is done for God.

"Not domineering over others."

That is perhaps the biggest mistake we make with our children.

God created our children to work.

But He didn't create them to work the same way the parent does.

Study your child to discover what God created them to do.

Don't just give them the chores that you don't want to do.

Learn how God has gifted them and what they are good at.

Let them know that God has given them passion and ability.

Teach a child that work is using and developing the ability that God gives.

And the result is the same as suffering well - God's glory (vs. 4).

When others see Jesus by their work they will obtain the unfading crown of glory.

III Living Well is the third lesson we can teach our children (1 Peter 4:17-19).

Everything in life is God's.

When we live as if everything is ours, life gets out of balance.

God has entrusted everything to us and will hold us accountable.

Verse 17 is very sobering.

God holds everyone accountable for their stewardship

But His judgment of stewardship begins with the household of God.

Surrendering to Christ is our only hope of living well.

The best way to live is to entrust our souls to God.

Teach your child that placing everything in God's care is living well.

We are called to obey the gospel of God.

And the gospel calls us stewards.

We are not owners, we are servants.

God is the owner.

We are to give an account of everything He has entrusted to us.

He has entrusted to us resources, time, money, choices, talents.

He has entrusted all that to us so we can share His joy.

IV Choosing Well is the fourth lesson we teach our children (1 Peter 4:14-16)

When we make wrong choices we will suffer.

Peter says, "let none of us suffer as a murderer, or a thief."

That is a relief.

Chances are good that our kids won't turn to a life of crime.

But then he adds to the list, wrong-doer and mischief-maker.

And we all gulp.

What hope is there for our kids?

Who hasn't done wrong?

Whose poorly planned actions haven't resulted in trouble?

Wrong choices will always have negative consequences.

The suffering from wrong choices ends in shame.

Trying to avoid suffering actually leads to wrong choices.

We end up right where we didn't want to be.

We can teach our children that the law is holy and good.

"So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good." (Romans 7:12)

The law that God has given is for our benefit and to help us choose well.

God is holy, and His guidance for life is absolute truth.

He wants to give us discernment to choose between good and evil.

God has commissioned parents to create a set of values in a child's heart.

We must teach our children to make godly choices, not popular or easy choices.

We are called to be holy.

If something is holy it is not casual, not every-day.

Something holy is set apart for special use.

Holy living allows you to experience God's best for your life.

Choosing well liberates us from being the centre of attention.

And we experience life at its fullest as we glorify God.

V Living grace-filled lives is the 5th lesson we teach our children (1 Peter 5:10)

Our world is totally performance based.

Even the world's religions are works based, do and do more.

Christianity stands differently because everything is done.

Jesus on the cross said, it is finished - grace.

Everything from God is a gift that is complete - grace.

There is no assembly required - grace.

The Law was not given so that we can finish what Jesus started.

The Law was given so that we could see how Jesus alone fulfilled it.

There is nothing we can add to what Jesus has already done.

The cross of Jesus is complete.

"The God of all grace, who has called you into His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, establish and strengthen you." (vs. 10)

The cross is God's greatest act of grace.

The best lesson we can teach our children is to take them back to the cross.

Salvation is a free gift received by grace through faith.

Grace produces gratitude toward God and love toward others.

So why are these lessons so important?

Because they help our children realize that failure is never final.

Our failure is never final with God.

God has the last word.

The world will put all kinds of performance pressure on us.

The world says that coming in second just means you're the first loser.

For God there are no losers, God only sees sons and daughters.
If that is true for God it should also be true for fathers.
Dads, we need to be a safe place for our children.
When a child is struggling ask, 'How can I help?'
Teach your children how to repent.
Teach them to be real with God and honest with you.

Our children were created to receive grace and to extend grace.

Hi, I'm Glenn and I'm a Dad.

And I have blown it big time with our kids.

In times of frustration, I have thrown these 5 life lessons out the window.

I have tried to deal with matters through my superior intellect.

Dorothy usually just shook her head.

'When is this man going to get it and grow up himself?'

Even the kids knew they were smarter than me.

There's nothing unusual about that when there are teens in the house.

I would drown the family in the silent treatment.

I would wash my hands of all responsibility to the kids.

I was going to make them suffer for making me suffer.

I would do that until God broke my heart.

I knew that I was failing but I was too stubborn to admit it.

I'm glad that our kids never saw any of my failures as final.

That is why as parents we need to offer grace to our kids in their failures.

We must never treat them as if their failures are final.

Eventually we are going to need grace from them when we fail.

Someday we will need to come back from failure.

That is why it is critical these 5 practical lessons are passed on.

But Peter elevates one other quality above everything else.

We can pass on these lessons with eloquence and consistency.

But they will never yield the results God designed without this quality.

"Above all hold unfailing your love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins." (1 Peter 4:8)

"Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love of the [children], a tender heart and a humble mind. Do not return evil for evil or reviling for reviling; but on the contrary bless, for to this you have been called, that you may obtain a blessing" (1 Peter 3:8-9)

Fathers, you do not have the power to make your kids turn out great.

Fathers, you do not have the power to make your kids turn out wrong.

Fathers, you do have the power to model a life that walks authentically with God.

Closing Song - Praise the Father, Praise the Son