



Parenting Workshop - July 15th at 12Stone™ Church - [REGISTER HERE!](#)

Make plans now to attend Tuesday, July 15th in Cornerstone for our 2nd workshop of the 79 Day Challenge! Refreshments and light hors d'oeuvres begin at 6:30 p.m. and the workshop at 7:00 pm. Register today. Child care will not be available for this event.

A PARENTING GAME PLAN

Last week we talked about fact that a **High Discipline, High Affection** parent is a Coaching Parent. They set out to take the raw material of their children, define what success in life looks like, and then shape their children into spiritual champions.

In the world of sports, coaching can make all the difference. If you take two teams with equally talented players, the team whose coach has the better game plan typically wins the game. A coach that chooses to play not to lose, rather than playing to win...can spell disaster for his team. Take the NBA championship series for example. Phil Jackson, the coach of the LA Lakers, is a phenomenal coach. He has won championships with the Chicago Bulls and the LA Lakers. However, in this series he did not always have a great game plan. During a couple of games when his team had the lead in the second quarter, he substituted all of his starters for players off the bench. Each time the Boston Celtics capitalized on the coaching mistake. The Celtics were able to go on huge scoring runs to either narrow the lead or take the lead for themselves.

The same is true in parenting. Many parents have a survival-based philosophy (playing not to lose) rather than a goal-oriented philosophy (playing to win). Moms and Dads that parent according to God's Classic Values have a well defined philosophy that guides their every move. They are intentional and strategic. They have a game plan and stick to it, making the necessary adjustments in order for their children to win in life.

Start Early

Great coaches don't wait until midway through the season to introduce their game plan to the team. They start implementing their game plan the moment they walk into the locker room or onto the practice field. From that moment on, they are relentless in executing their plan.

Coaching parents start early. They begin parenting while their children are very young...and are relentlessly diligent from that point on. For many parents, especially first-timers, putting this into practice sounds impossible. They try to balance the desire to enjoy their child's early years and at the same time meet their nonstop needs...all while enduring sleepless nights.

As parents, we must remember that children are sponges, soaking up everything in their environments, whether we want them to or not. Many studies verify that children begin absorbing values and beliefs as soon as they can understand

language. That means that children begin to develop their worldview, or moral foundation, around the age of two.

George Barna has conducted extensive research on our spiritual maturity process. Barna's research discovered that a person's lifelong behaviors and views are generally developed when they are young – particularly before they reach the teenage years. Below are some of the implications of Barna's research.

First, a person's moral foundations are generally in place by the time they reach age nine. While those foundations are refined and the application of those foundations may shift to some extent as the individual ages, their fundamental perspectives on truth, integrity, meaning, justice, morality, and ethics are formed quite early in life. After their first decade, most people simply refine their views as they age without a wholesale change in those leanings.

Second, a person's response to the meaning and personal value of Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection is usually determined before a person reaches eighteen. In fact, a majority of people make a lasting determination about the personal significance of Christ's death and resurrection by age 12.

Third, Barna showed that in most cases, people's spiritual beliefs are formed when they are pre-teens. Those beliefs included perceptions of the nature of God, the existence of Satan, the reliability of the Bible, the holiness of Jesus Christ, and the means of gaining God's favor.

"In essence," Barna noted, "what you believe by the time you are 13 is what you will die believing. Of course, there are many individuals who go through life-changing experiences in which their beliefs are altered, or instances in which a concentrated body of religious teaching changes one or more core beliefs. However, most people's minds are made up and they believe they know what they need to know spiritually by age 13. Their focus in absorbing religious teaching after that age is to gain reassurance and confirmation of their existing beliefs rather than to glean new insights that will redefine their foundations."

As parents, we must recognize that from the moment a child leaves the womb until the time they leave the home, we must tirelessly guard and shape the mind, heart, and soul of our children.



Measure The Results

Great coaches can measure the results of their game plan. They set benchmarks to determine how well the team is doing in executing the plan.

Coaching parents set tangible and measureable parenting goals. This requires that you sit down and think through where you are going, how you are going to get there, and then develop some steps along the way to show that you are making progress.

Here are some ideas on spiritual goals to help you get started with this process:

- *Spiritual Growth Tools* – What faith skills do you want your child to develop? The goal here is to teach your child the tools that are available for spiritual growth. Some key skills are teaching your children how to pray, how to study the Bible, and how to worship.
- *Faith Foundations* – What foundational Christian teachings and beliefs do you want your child to grasp? The goal here is to think through the major Biblical stories and determine which ones are essential to your child's faith. This list will vary but here a few to consider:
 - Creation Story (Genesis 1-2)
 - Fall of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3)
 - Moses (Exodus 3-14)

- 10 Commandments (Exodus 19-20)
- David & Goliath (1 Samuel 16-17)
- Daniel (Daniel 3, 6)
- Temptation of Christ (Matthew 4:1-11)
- Prayer (Matthew 6:5-15)
- Judging people (Matthew 7:1-6)
- Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12)
- Greatest Commandment (Matthew 22:34-40)
- Last Supper (Matthew 26:17-30)
- Crucifixion & Resurrection (Matthew 27:32-28:15)
- Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20)
- Birth of Christ (Luke 1-2)
- Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)
- Nicodemus & Salvation (John 3:1-21)
- Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-13)
- Saul's Conversion (Acts 9)
- Falling short (Romans 3:9-31)
- Wages of sin (Romans 6:23)
- Love (1 Corinthians 13)
- Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)
- *Living According to God's Pattern* – How can you teach your child to live according to God's pattern (Romans 12:1-2)? The goal here is to establish ways for your child to live out their faith in tangible ways. Here are four principles for living according to God's pattern:
 - *Love God* - Get on God's agenda. "...apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5
 - *Love Yourself* – Integrity is key. "The first change the power of God is designed to make is not around you, it is within you..." James 4:1-10
 - *Love Others* – Others first. "...look to the interests of others" Philippians 2:1-8
 - *Love What You Do* – Results Matter. "...You entrusted talents, I have gained (results)..." Matthew 25:14-30

Review Game Footage

Every great coach and great parent knows that even the best developed plans are hard to execute. Life happens...and when it does it can wreak havoc on your carefully conceived plans. But the potential for failure is no excuse not to prepare for success.

Positive outcomes in sports, business, and parenting rarely happen by chance. It is the result of intentional planning, implementation, and revision. Assessment is critical along the way. We must evaluate each day by what went right, what went wrong, and how can we improve our parenting efforts tomorrow based on the lessons learned today.

This is not an easy task. It requires an honest parenting assessment and adjustment of our efforts based on our desired goals. This requires that we have a clear list of values and objectives that define the outcomes we want for our children. Then we must match our child's words and behaviors against that list to determine how we are doing.

As you come up with your parenting game plan there are a couple of key things to keep in mind. First, you cannot take a "one size fits all approach". God has wired each of your children differently. They each require a different game plan based on their personality, spiritual giftedness, natural talents, and limitations. What might help one of your kids in their development, may actually hurt the other. This obviously requires the time and effort to learn the unique nature of each of your children to come up with a plan that will work best for each child.

Secondly, keep in mind that each child develops at a different pace. We often want to hurry the development of our children. Allow each child to grow in a way that reflects who God made him or her to be. This obviously takes patience, understanding, clear purpose, and gentleness to accomplish this for each of your children. However, you will be teaching your kids the joy of growing at the pace God ordained for them to grow.

Developing a game plan for parenting is no simple task, but it is essential to teaching and training your children to leave your home. A clear game plan for each child is key to raising spiritual champions.



Questions To Reflect On

- What faith principles do you believe are critical for your children to learn? How can you present those principles and reinforce them in the life of your child?
- You will get tired, distracted, and frustrated. What steps can you take to be sure that when you get weak, you don't let your guard down and enable your children to suffer the consequences?
- As husband and wife you must be an effective parenting team. What would improve your teamwork?
- How are your kids different and how can you adjust your parenting based on those differences?
- What can you do to determine the developmental pace and nuances of your children?