

Life Notes *Family Matters with Pastor Cory*

2. **Leading the Littles**

INTRODUCTION

Andy Stanley says, "Your greatest contribution to the kingdom of God may not be something you do, but someone you raise."

What a terrific, yet terrifying thought!

It's terrific because God has given parents an incredible opportunity! It's terrifying because it requires so much work!

It isn't as simple as telling our children how to live. We also have to show them how to live. Why? Because regardless of what we tell our kids, they will listen mostly to the example we live.

THE GREATEST FORM OF LEADERSHIP

As a matter of fact, I believe example is the most powerful form of leadership/parenting. Even the Apostle Paul agreed with this. He had a lot to say and gave a lot of instruction to his spiritual children. But at the end of the day, he would say, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."

Though parents are to set the example in all things, here are a few areas I think are especially critical:

01) **Our Example Toward God**

It is vital for our kids to see a true, honest relationship with God. I used to think discipling my children meant reading the Bible and discussing it. Though that is a part of it, I've found that initiating conversations about the Lord is also powerful. This doesn't mean always having the right answer. Often times it means expressing my heart when I don't understand what God is doing in a situation.

They also need to see our faith in action. We can show them this through our personal prayer times, reading the Bible, fasting, with tithe and offerings, and through sharing our faith.

02) **Our Example Toward Self**

It is important that we love ourselves as God has created us! Maybe you are quirky. That's okay! Perhaps your shoulders slouch like mine. Celebrate it! I'm not saying to neglect health, etc. But some things can't be prevented, so why obsess over it?

I have a relative who has always struggled with weight gain. As a result, it is constantly a topic of discussion. Sadly, that negative body image has rubbed off on their young children.

Shift your focus from what you think to what God thinks! You are:

Loved By God

Romans 8

Beautifully and Wonderfully Made

Psalm 139

Not Who I Once Was

2 Corinthians 5:17

A Son/Daughter of God

John 1

03) **Our Example Toward Others**

If we want our children to honor and love others, we must lead the way. This involves how we treat Carolina or Clemson fans, our spouses, bad drivers, different races, and the lost.

The good news is this: if we teach them to love God and love themselves, loving others should be a result.

04) **Our Example Toward Sin**

To avoid disaster in life, children need to see us take sin seriously. We don't have the luxury to pick and choose. All sin is a destructive force and we must treat it as such.

I was once called to counsel a teen struggling with homosexuality. Though my approach was biblical, he just couldn't understand why he was being "judged", while his parents were never confronted about their gossip of church leadership. Through example, he was taught that some sins are tolerated while others aren't. That is not the example we want to set.

We should examine our lives often (how we speak, things we watch, what we listen to, etc.) to ensure it aligns with God's Word.

CLOSE

Our example will shape our children, plain and simple. Now, none of this is meant to discourage your heart. There is no perfect parent. If you feel like you've blown it, join the crowd! But even in failure, we can set the example. So try it today! As you put your kids to bed, confess some way you have missed it and ask them to forgive you. It won't be used as ammunition against you, but as admiration for you!