

Life Notes *Family Matters with Pastor Cory*

3. **Cultivating Children**

INTRODUCTION

After a long day at church, I went to tuck my daughter into bed. I'd been irritated earlier, because I didn't think she engaged conversation enough with people that morning. I went to her room and said, "Baby, you have to stop being so shy!"

In that moment, the Spirit of God brought instant conviction to me! He spoke to my heart and said, "If I have created her to be a shy individual, who are you to say otherwise?!"

Needless to say, this shook me! I was only upset because I felt embarrassed when she didn't engage conversation with a church member. I thought, "She's a pastor's kid. She has to act a certain way." How selfish of me! That's when I began to understand the difference between cultivating a child and controlling one.

CONTROLLING VS CULTIVATING

Control pushes a child to be like you, the way you want them to be, or to do the things you want them to do. But as frustrating as it may be, your children may be wired very differently than you.

A tendency to control often stems from several areas:

- Unfulfilled dreams in our own lives.
- A mindset that believes our way is the only way.
- Unrealistic expectations.
- Not understanding different personality types.
- Fear of failure.

I am not saying you shouldn't make your child do things. I am simply suggesting that you ensure your motives are for their betterment based on how God has created them. This is what it means to cultivate a child.

Mark 6:19-24 gives us a perfect example of a controlling parent. A young girl is promised any request that she asks, because she has pleased the king. Even "up to half my kingdom," he says.

Before making the decision, she asks her mother for advice. Now, this girl could have secured her financial future or a number of

other things. But this selfish parent advised her daughter to request something different, simply to gain revenge on a prophet who had hurt her feelings. And this is how John the Baptist's head ended up on a silver platter. Although this example may be extreme and sinister, we can learn from it.

Our role as a parent is to lead our kids effectively based on how God has created them. With that, below are a few examples of how to cultivate without controlling:

Appropriately push them towards calling, not a career.

All good parents want their children to succeed in life. But we must not confuse our definition of "success" with God's definition.

Remember that calling and character is far more important than achievements, the career, or the popularity of a person.

Understand their personality type, don't assume it.

This isn't an excuse for kids to act out based on their "personality." It is simply to help us understand that our children may have a different personality, strengths, and weaknesses than we do.

Allow them to explore their interests, not just your own.

Let your kids do extracurricular activities they are interested in. Don't force them to play high school football, because you played.

Celebrate their hard work, not just successes.

Before Jesus' first miracle, God honored Him by saying, "This is My Son in whom I am well pleased." Why? Because God knew His commitment to hard work before He succeeded at anything.

Now, I don't think the 7th place team should get a 1st place trophy. But let's be careful to reward their hard work, not just outcomes. Especially when it comes to grades and sports and such.

CLOSE

There is balance in all things. Although parenting is not about control, it's also not about coddling. We are to find the ebb and flow as we strive to cultivate them as God has created them.

And don't worry if you've blown it. Everyone has! Leave the past in the past and move ahead in the grace of God. He is working it all out for our good!