

Life Notes *Family Matters with Pastor Cory*

11. A Fear of Failure

INTRODUCTION

Joy and I have served in full time youth ministry since 2002. We've raised hundreds of teenagers...from a distance. But until recently, we have never raised a teenager in our home. Now that we are in the midst of it, let me be honest, it is terrifying! The fear and feelings of failure often grip our hearts. I think all good parents wrestle with these things. But that fear often leads many to respond in one of two extreme ways:

Overparenting

Honestly, Joy and I lean this way. Because I do, I will try not to be bias. However, I do believe that we must protect what God has entrusted to us at all cost! I also believe there should be balance. Often times, its fear that motivates this over reaction instead of trust in the Lord. When this happens, it can be smothering to a child.

For most, your children aren't as bad as you may think. It's likely just teenage hormones!

For others, your children probably aren't as angelic as you want to believe either. Which leads me to the next response of parents:

Underparenting

Many parents see successful parenting as a "positive relationship" with a hormonal, emotional teenager. So in place of parenting, some choose to become the friend. Therefore, the approach is too "hands off." There is nothing wrong with being a friend to your child, but that should always come second to being a parent.

THREE Ds OF PARENTING

Kids need directions, discussions, and discipline. The nuts and bolts are for you to decide. But all of these things are desperately needed for kids growing up in this generation. I'm reminded of a great quote from Tommy Lee Jones in the movie, Captain America. He said, "Wars aren't won with niceness, but bravery." Make no mistake about it: You are in a war for the lives and souls of your children! Notice I didn't say a war *with* your children, but a war *for* them. This war will not be won with ease. It requires a great practical and spiritual effort.

Directions

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6

As Pastor has taught us, the Proverbs are generalities, not promises for every situation. Nonetheless, we should heed the wisdom of God's word! Setting up guidelines for children is a huge part of parenting them. Again, the guidelines are for you to determine, but need to be in place.

- Honor towards all people
- Ungodly movies, music, media intake
- Phone and in-home curfews
- Godly values

Discussions

Teach (My words) to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Deuteronomy 11:19

In the passage, the Lord is stressing the importance of spiritual discussions. I also believe God is trying to help us understand how important conversations are in raising children.

- God honoring friendships
- The why behind the what of guidelines
- Personal failures
- Self worth
- Sexual topics (widely not discussed in homes)

Discipline

Those who love their children care enough to discipline them. Proverbs 13:24

After a WSP Conference, we sat at breakfast with Jack Taylor. He said something I'll never forget: "For most parents, discipline isn't discipline; it's revenge." Parents must be sure that our motivation for discipline isn't payback or frustration. It must come from a heart of concern for the child.

As a side note, it's important to remember that discipline is not about you. It's about molding the character of a child. Even when they hurt your feelings (and they will), fight the urge to shame or manipulate them. This will only create greater issues for them down the road.

- Remove electronics
- Withhold events (sporting, social)
- Additional chores
- Earlier bedtime

CLOSE

If you're wrestling through the parenting process, let me leave you with a word of encouragement: There are no perfect parents. I've seen kids turn out amazingly, even though their parents were terrible. I've also seen kids wreck their lives while having the greatest parents possible! There is no formula. There isn't a one-size fits all method. Every family, parent, and child is different. We do the best we can! Let me assure you; you're doing a much better job than you think! I promise. *Don't stop fighting for your family!*