

Copyright © Two Journeys Ministry

Andrew M. Davis

Class Notes

[www.twojourneys.org](http://www.twojourneys.org)

Please use in accordance with the copyright policy found at [twojourneys.org](http://twojourneys.org)

## **Parenting the Early Years**

### **Class 2: The Central Mission**

#### **I. The Overwhelming Drive for Practical Solutions**

- A. Tyranny of the Urgent
- B. My Disclaimers Concerning Practical Wisdom
- C. Parenting the Early Years is Hard... Physical... Exhausting... Bewildering
- D. It's Easy to Zero in on Practical Issues and Seek Direct Do's and Don'ts
- E. A Sampler of Some Advice on the Internet
- F. Practical Wisdom is Very Helpful
- G. The Big Picture is Vital as Well... Without Neglecting the Practical and Day to Day
- H. How Does Christian Parenting in the Early Years Fit into God's Eternal Plan?

#### **II. The Centrality of the Glory of God**

- A. The Centrality of God's Glory

Catechism we used...

Q1) Who made you? A1) God.

Q2) What else did God make? A2) God made all things.

Q3) Why did God make all things? A3) For his own glory.

Q4) How can you glorify God? A4) By loving God and doing what he commands.

Jonathan Edwards: The End for Which God Created the World

Simple, profound question: Why did God create the world and us in it?

Edwards zeroes in on “ultimate” ends and “chief” ends above lesser ends... that which is MOST VALUED

The ultimate answer is “for his own glory”

{It's like a chain of purpose or cause: this happens so that this happens so that this happens... etc. Like the child's incessant “But why??” “The pretty bird has many feathers.” “Why?” “So that it can fly?” “Why?” “So that it can be happy and live and feed and mate and make nests and migrate?” “Why?” “So that God can be glorified” That last answer is always the ultimate answer to ALL chains of questions}

B. All Things Made for God's Own Pleasure... His Own Glory

***Romans 11:36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.***

C. Humanity Created to Display God's Glory

***Isaiah 43:6-7 Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth--  
7 everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.***

D. Humanity Created to Know God's Glory

***Habakkuk 2:14 For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.***

E. Humanity Redeemed for the Praise of God's Glory

***Ephesians 1:11-12 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, 12 in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.***

### III. God's Vision for Parenting

A. Procreation

***Genesis 1:26-28 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful***

*and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*

#### B. Covenant Vision

*Genesis 18:19 I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him."*

Godly parenting is essential to the fulfillment of God's covenant plans

#### C. Multigenerational Vision

*Psalms 78:3-7 what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us. <sup>4</sup> We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. <sup>5</sup> He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, <sup>6</sup> so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. <sup>7</sup> Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.*

As opposed to Hezekiah's lamentable short-sightedness

*Isaiah 39:6-8 The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your fathers have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the LORD. <sup>7</sup> And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood who will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon." <sup>8</sup> "The word of the LORD you have spoken is good," Hezekiah replied. For he thought, "There will be peace and security in my lifetime."*

#### D. Christian Vision

*Ephesians 6:4 And fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

### IV. The Primary Goal of Christian Parenting: Salvation

#### A. What Would It Profit...?

*Matthew 16:26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

Parents often want to “give the world” to their kids... but this stands as a timeless warning to us all; if you give the world to your kids, and they end up forfeiting their souls, what good would it be?

#### B. Scripture’s Purpose is Parenting’s Purpose

***2 Timothy 3:14-17 ... how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.***

#### C. Not Just Their Salvation... Yours Too

1. Parenting, like marriage, is a “workshop of sanctification”!!
2. We are not done being saved!!

***1 Timothy 4:16 Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.***

***Philippians 2:12-13 work out your salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.***

3. God is going to use the pressures of parenting to drive you away from selfishness, self-righteousness, and self-sufficiency!!
4. Parenting will drive you to your knees in prayer!
5. Parenting will show you your own sin patterns... even from the very beginning of your time with a newborn; you will realize how not only is the child “fanatically committed to self”, but so are you!!

### V. The Second Goal of Christian Parenting: Maturity

#### A. Practical Maturity: Independence, Taking Responsibility

“Maturity is taking responsibility”

In a simple sense, parenting is preparing the child to not need you at all... to be fruitfully independent from you in every respect. That is maturity... it’s also a painful process for us!

When they come home from the hospital, they are totally helpless and dependent on you for everything; by the time you are empty-nesters, they don't really need you for anything.

#### B. Comprehensive Maturity

***Luke 2:52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.***

Wisdom: mental and moral development

Stature: physical development

In favor with God: religious development

In favor with people: social development

#### C. Especially Spiritual Maturity

The goal of salvation is total CONFORMITY TO CHRIST

***Romans 8:28-29 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. <sup>29</sup> For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.***

***1 John 2:6 Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.***

### VI. The Third Goal of Christian Parenting: Fruitfulness

#### A. Prepared for Every Good Work

***2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.***

All Christian parenting beyond salvation points to shaping and molding their hearts and minds and bodies for usefulness to Christ, fruitfulness in his Kingdom.

#### B. Prepared for Kingdom Fruitfulness

***John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.***

### VII. Some Overarching Themes for the Early Years

Establishing convictions, themes, patterns that will last all the years you have together

You can't just suddenly put these things into practice when your oldest is ten and your third-born is two. Start now! If you are already well into your parenting, rejoice at the good ways that God has led you up to this point, but look for ways to improve... or perhaps to repent for neglect.

A. Husbands and wives must work together in their God-given roles

1. Tremendous opportunity to work together in a blessed partnership
2. Each of you has a powerfully vital but different role from each other.
3. Key text:

***Ephesians 5:22-28 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. <sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her <sup>26</sup> to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, <sup>27</sup> and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup> In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.***

4. Fathers are to model a Christ-like leadership in the home
5. Mothers are to model a church-like submission to the father's godly leadership
6. Toward the children, the husband and wife must present a united front, and the children taught to obey BOTH the mother and father equally

B. Parents must lead, children must follow; parents must command, children must obey

1. Parents must not be squeamish about their God-given authority
2. All genuine authority comes from God (Romans 13:1), and children must learn to submit gladly to God-ordained authority very early in life
3. Child-centered parenting is harmful to the whole family
4. Commands must be given lovingly, clearly, and with an expectation of obedience
5. Here is a very helpful definition of obedience:

"All the way, right away, with a happy spirit."

- a. All the way = completely, not partially

b. Right away = promptly, without delay (“To delay is to disobey”)

c. With a happy spirit = glad to obey, not sullen, defiant, or angry

6. In the early years, it’s vital to get used to commanding your children and them get used to obeying your voice.

7. Sometimes, you may even orchestrate arbitrary circumstances and trials and occasions by which they learn to obey you... like calling them from across the room, so they learn to come when called.

C. Children are a blessed gift from the Lord... so enjoy these years!

1. With all the challenges it’s easy to forget how much of a blessing they are

***Genesis 1:28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.***

***Genesis 9:1 Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.***

***Psalms 127:3-5 Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward. <sup>4</sup> Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth. <sup>5</sup> How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them***

2. Cherish the ever-changing phases of their young years like ever-changing hues of a sunset... it will not last long, so delight in it

Note: one of the greatest helps I received from the Lord in the early stages was Michael Card’s lullaby albums “Sleep Sound in Jesus” and “Come to the Cradle”... they helped me realize what a privilege it is to parent an infant and raise up children for the glory of God

Lyrics:

Come to the cradle, come and find peace  
Alone in the cradle simplicity sleeps  
Behold perfect wisdom, so gentle and mild  
In the innocent upward trusting glance of a child

Come hear the call of sweet sighs in the dark  
Their touch is tender, it touches your heart  
The bustle and business last year after year  
But this little baby won’t always be here

When God gives a gift, He wraps it up in a child  
He made them, loves them, so wondrously wild  
And so you are chosen, and called out for prayer

So come to the cradle, He waits for you there.

D. Children are a stewardship from the Lord... they are infinitely more His than yours!

1. It is vital you learn this lesson early on
2. They belong to him, he made them, owns them, is their God and hopefully their Savior
3. Like you: they came from God and are going back to God
4. Do not make of them an idol, or charge God with injustice if he does something with them you would not choose to do
5. Realize also that you will be accountable to God for how you raise them; this will keep you from lording it over them with your authority
6. Also this perspective should keep you from anxiety about their provision and their conversion... these are ultimately God's responsibility

E. Parenting is the most effective evangelism in the world

1. There is no more effective relationship in the world for leading a sinner to Christ... no spouses, relatives, friends, co-workers, neighbors, campus ministers, roommates, missionaries, mass evangelists, TV preachers, street evangelists, chaplains, pastors, VBS workers, Sunday School teachers, youth workers, blog writers, tweeters, or any other category of human relationship will have as great a record of success in evangelism as do parents with their own children
2. Could it be that as many 75% of all Christians on Earth were led to the Savior by a parents or parents?
3. Since this is true, take full advantage of this relationship... you have unlimited access, the authority to set up their world surrounded by the gospel, countless poignant teaching opportunities, clear commands from Scripture, and their own hearts are not hardened in long-standing sin patterns that result in pride and hostile walls of opposition

F. Children have tender hearts without a history of sin

1. Insight from the president of Child Evangelism Fellowship... Christ told us what must happen to us for us to go to heaven

***Matthew 18:3 And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."***



2. But children are already there! They have an essential willingness to accept what you say as true; they are ready to believe in an invisible Savior simply at your word; they tend to be much more compliant, soft-hearted, following like sheep
3. Once someone is 20 years old, they have been sinning for 20 years, with many habits of sin built up that harden their heart... this is even more true of a 30 year old, and so on

G. Children grow quickly like a dimmer switch

***Proverbs 4:18 The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day.***

1. The phases pass quickly, like scenery out the window on a cross-country trip; don't blink... you'll miss something beautiful
2. Also, the rules of engagement are variable... some things never change, other things are constantly changing

H. Time is very short... but don't panic!

***James 4:14 What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.***

I. Establish spiritual patterns in the family

J. Establish discipline patterns that develop as they grow

# calvin and hobbes

by MORTIMER WATSON 1985

distributed by UNIVERSAL UCCS INC. - 6/15

