

Getting Your Family to Mars: A Practical Guide to Revolutionary Christian Parenting

Parenting is like flying to Mars. If you don't plot your course carefully over the next 20 years, you will miss the planet completely! The closer the object is, the less accurate I can be! The farther away, the more accurate I must be! If I'm off one foot now, I will be off millions of miles out in space! The same is true with parenting. The destination is 20 years away! Pr. 3:21 & 21:5 NLTI

1st decision – Where do I want them to be in 20 years?

What do I want them to look like?

Where do I want to take these kids?

What do I want to accomplish?

Write it down and stick to it!

*Travel Tip – make sure you and your spouse are using the same map!

Critical Point – Your target stays the same! So, using your compass, you regularly reassess and make adjustments when necessary, so you don't stray off course millions of miles.

2nd decision – How are you going to get them there?

What things must be done to make sure you achieve what you have begun? What tools are you going to use?

My thought for your consideration:

Decide your prime objective.

My prime objective: This is my desire for my kids. I want kids that love and obey God! No matter what their age! I want to turn my kids into lovers and obeyers of God. Of course, I start by teaching them to obey their parents and work to install an obedient heart in them.

A point to ponder: If foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, discipline will help remove the foolishness and replace it with wisdom! Proverbs says a rebuke goes deeper in the heart than 100 lashes to the back of a fool! The bible says that the wise person loves to be instructed, but the self sufficient fools fall flat on their faces! As my children got older, I believed that words (i.e. rebuke, correction, instruction, advice) would be needed to discipline their life! So far, that has proven true. I call this "coachability." This is the difference between a great player and a mediocre player, a winner and a loser. The thing I am most proud of in my kids is their obedience, submission, and coachability.

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The Ultimate Goal of Parenting (The planet we are aiming for)

My ultimate goal: (a sample from Mark Darling)

To develop children who will love, follow and obey Christ with all their heart and throughout their life.
To give them the life skills and training needed to succeed as a husband, wife, parent, person and Christian.

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Points to Ponder

“Most people’s parenting is usually an exercise in chaos management, rather than managing the chaos out of their lives with strong leadership, clear vision and direction!”

“My children were given to me by God. They are a stewardship from Him! To raise them with secular values and a worldly point of view would be betrayal and high treason, a complete disregard of my stewardship to God!”

“Hardship is essential for the full development of character. Children who are never forced to face certain daily rigors of life, never forced to stick with hard things, are doomed by their parents to failure and frustrations in life!”

“Parenting principles are great, but without a method of systematic implementation, nothing will change.” (example: Exercise, we all know, is good for your health. There are many ways to exercise – bike, blade, stair climb, ski, walk, run, etc. Unless you systematically implement one of these methods, the value of exercise is absolutely meaningless.)

God gave us our children, He expects us to give them back to Him better than when we received them.

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Life Plan and Objectives for Parenting

“I have included my plan as an example to give you food for thought.”

Pr. 29:18 “Where there is no vision the people will run wild.”

“My plan for my children. If I accomplish these things, I will be very happy & satisfied.

These are the main things I wish to pass on to them.” Mark Darling

1. Fear the Lord

Proverbs 1:7 LB

“How does a man become wise? The first step is to trust and revere the Lord!”

- A. A deep and abiding respect for the Lord and His word. Pr 13:13 LB
- B. A vibrant, healthy relationship with Jesus Christ. Knowing Him is the greatest thing in the world.
- C. A commitment to follow and obey Him, no matter what the cost.
- D. A Daily walk with God. Habits of reading, writing, memorizing, praying, & meditating
- E. A dynamic faith in God. Trusting God in all things
- F. WISDOM – GODS WISDOM. Get it no matter what it costs
- G. A love for God

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2. Godly character!

There is nothing more important to success in life than character. Nothing else can substitute for a lack thereof.

- A. Kindness - To others and those outside the family
- B. Compassion toward people – Caring for their hurts and problems. “Your care for others is the measure of your greatness.”
- C. Hardworking – Taking personal responsibility for their lives. Realizing the joy and rewards of working hard.
- D. Honesty and personal integrity - They would be of the highest ethical and moral behavior
- E. Purity – In conduct and in thinking
- F. Disciplined and diligent - In the use of time, talents, resources, money, health, etc.
- G. Great sense of humor - They would know how to laugh at life and themselves and never at others.
- H. Cheerfulness – They would be a true joy to be around. They would know that joy is a choice.
- I. Self starters and initiator - See what needs doing and do it. Taking responsibility for improvements. Not blaming others.
- J. Loving - Love is everything, without love we re nothing. 1 Cor 13:1-8
- K. Trustworthy and faithful - Faithfulness in little things is a big deal. They can be counted on.
- L. Humility towards God and others - A humble spirit about their gifts and talents, a deep dependence on God, not themselves, a brokenness before God, and a willingness to admit their wrong.
- M. Servanthood – Serving is better than being served: The greatest of all will be the servant of all.
- N. Teachable spirit – Eager learners: A willingness to accept advice – coachable
- O. Loyalty - A commitment to work through things with people, to stand by them in the face of criticism.
- P. Courage - A willingness to speak out.
- Q. Sound judgment, prudence and discernment - Ability to make wise choices regarding people, circumstances & money.
- R. Gracious living in speech and conduct - Well mannered.
- S. Wise tongue - They would use their mouth with wisdom & grace.
- T. Self-control – Behavior, speech and emotions. (Pr 25:28 LB)
- U. Endurance, patience and perseverance - Ability to stick with hard things and finish what they started.
- V. Thankful spirit - They would always be grateful and thankful to God for what He is taking them through.
- W. Contentment – “Godliness with contentment is great gain.
- X. Time management – The wise use of time. Using a planning book to effectively plan out their time. Living out godly priorities.

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3. Winning attitudes and healthy self esteem!

Attitude – Pr 24:10 LB

- A. A positive outlook on life, based on the Bible
- B. Hopeful
- C. Full of Faith
- D. A “can-do” attitude

Healthy self-esteem

- A. Affirming their uniqueness
- B. Helping them discover and use their gifts and abilities
- C. Emphasizing and affirming their strengths
- D. Helping them succeed and to learn to handle failure
- E. Showing them how God uses and planned for their weaknesses

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4. People Skills!

“To love people like God loves them. Everything we do involves people!”

A. Relational skills.

Learning to talk things over with friends. Dealing with conflict

B. Friendship skills.

How to be a good friend and how to avoid bad friends

C. Communication skills.

How to listen, how to understand, how to speak

D. Understanding and tolerance for others' uniqueness and differences

E. How to work as a team with others

F. How to deal with the opposite sex

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5. Leadership skills!

“The world and the church desperately need leaders!”

A. Lead by example.

They must be before they can lead.

They must be able to lead themselves before they can lead others.

B. Leaders are servants.

This is what God’s standard is

C. Dealing with peer pressure – Stand against it.

Becoming a positive influence for good?

D. Leaders are influencers

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Guiding beliefs and not so obvious principles that have guided my parenting:

- 1. The single most important thing that I passed on to me kids:** Bible reading and writing a verse each day in their journal! We expect kids to brush their teeth, make their bed and get dressed each day. I expect them to read and journal.
- 2. Without this component you lose the GAME** – A loving and open relationship with your kids. You must win their heart through love, service, trust, time, genuineness, humility and a listening ear!
- 3. Use your authority for good.** Remember who's in control and remind them of it when necessary. Don't be afraid to exert yourself with your kids! Kids and teens must learn submission or they will never be useful to God. Remember Jesus said, "Father, not my will but Yours be done." Lamentations says, "It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth." I believe that yoke is the yoke of authority and dying to self.
- 4. Shatter the independence myth.** No one is really independent and teens shouldn't be either. We all answer to others: A spouse, a boss, God, etc. I haven't been independent for 23 years. I answer to my wife, 4 kids, 9 pastors and God! I believe in graduated responsibility. It's not about giving our teens freedom and independence, but teaching them responsibility and interdependence.
- 5. The best tool for shaping and protecting our kids.** Accountability – For actions, attitudes, the buddy system at its finest! In our house, you really can't get away with anything. Someone will confront you, console you, affirm you, correct you, advise you, rebuke you, exhort you, challenge you and help you! There's no place to hide. No one has their own room! My wife is not afraid to get in my face if needed. My kids know that I am accountable to them and to mom and to God!
- 6. The power of stories, warning, tears and brutal, frank honesty.** Help them understand the "whys?" Explain, be creative. Use everything and every emotion at your disposal. In the end frankness is appreciated more than flattery. Flatter your kids and you will ruin their lives! Be honest about your struggles, let them see your Christianity being worked out.
- 7. The one thing that can corrupt all the good that you've instilled.** Bad Friends! Saved and Lost!
- 8. Scare your kids to death!** Make them afraid of sin and its deceptive power. Take nothing for granted! Help them see the harsh realities of life! Teens and kids must understand the law of consequence!
- 9. Give them something to believe in and be apart of!** Explain to them over and over again where you're going, what you're trying to accomplish in their lives, why it will benefit them, how you're going to accomplish it, how God is preparing them for greatness, and why you're doing what you're doing. Let them know that as your kids, they're a vital part of your team for reaching the world and building the Church. Help them become church planters.

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10. Life is not about having fun! The world says, “Fun is the ultimate goal!” I make sure I tell my kids it’s not and show them the way I live. Life is about accomplishing something meaningful and lasting and God honoring with your life. It’s about investing for eternity.

Parenting Project Worksheet

1. What is your family goal?

What are the main things you want to accomplish with your parenting? Look over the five areas Mark shared, Talk together about which areas are most important to you.

2. What is your plan?

What tools do you plan to use to accomplish your goals? (i.e. serving family members, job outside the home, sports, schooling, discipline, etc.)