

"Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth" Psalm 127:4

Session 3: Your Child's Development: Shaping Influences

I. Definition of Shaping Influences

- A. Events and circumstances in a child's development that prove to be catalysts for the person they become
- B. Biblical basis
 - i. Genesis 18:19
 - ii. Deuteronomy 6:2
 - iii. Proverbs 22:6
 - iv. Ephesians 6:4
- C. The person your child becomes is the product of his life experience **and** how he responds to the shaping influences of life

II. Examples of Shaping Influences

- A. Family structure—includes the myriad of different combinations of relationships that form a family's background and history
- B. Family values—what is important to mom & dad?
- C. Family boundaries—what is private, what do you share?
- D. Family roles—children learn how to be parents as they observe mom and dad
- E. Family conflict resolution—how are issues resolved?
- F. Response to failure—what happens when mistakes and failures occur?
- G. Family history—major events in the life of a family, like marriages, deaths, moves, etc.
- H. Education—type and form
- I. Instability of the culture

III. Two mistakes that are made regarding shaping influences

- A. Denial—saying that children are unaffected by early childhood experiences
- B. Determinism—assuming children are simply the product of shaping influences
 - i. For instance: "If I provide the proper environment, it will automatically produce the proper child."

IV. Your kids are never passive responders to the shaping influences you provide

- A. They are active responders
- B. Children respond to the Godward orientation of their hearts

V. What is this teaching about?

- A. It is *not* about how to get it right
- B. It is *not* to guarantee that you kids will grow up in the faith

- C. It is really about living before God in obedience
 - i. Fulfilling the calling God has given to you
 - ii. Trusting God for what God will bring in the lives of my children

VI. Then why bother?

- A. You do all that God has called you to do because God has called you to do it
- B. Ultimately, your children are responsible for their responses to your parenting
- C. The condition of your child's heart determines how he will respond to the shaping influences of his life (see Proverbs 4:23)
- D. Proverbs chapter 9 provides the balance needed
 - i. The wise person responds well to instruction and grows wiser
 - ii. The foolish person resists instruction and sinks more deeply into rebellion

VII. We have three reasons for hope

- A. God's purpose is to work through families
- B. The gospel is suited to the deepest needs of your children
- C. The gospel is powerful—it can transform your kids

Take Home Principle #3: Unchangeable circumstances in our lives are tools God uses to mold us to be more like Christ, for our good and for His glory.

Resources: FamilyIfetoday.com

"Becoming a Spiritually Healthy Family" Michele Anthony

"Grace Based Parenting" Tim Kimmell

"Growing a Spiritually Strong Family" by Dennis Rainey

"Leaving a Different Spiritual Legacy" by Jack and Lisa Hibbs

Homework: Read Chapter 2 in the book "Shepherding a Child's Heart." Try to have a date night to discuss the following questions.

1. Individually, list the most important values that you would like to pass on to your children. Try to come up with at least 12-15 core values. If you have trouble thinking of many, see list below. (Don't go to the list too quickly!)
2. From this list, designate your top five core values in order of priority.
3. Discuss your answers with each other. In what areas do you agree and disagree? Talk about how you need one another for balance.
4. Now develop a unified Top Ten Core Values list for your family in order of priority. Discuss how you can both model and teach these values to your children. Hold on to this list, refer to it at your every 6 month parenting summits as you assess where each child is and what you need to work on with that child.

Core Value Possibilities: If you have problems thinking of some core values, the following categories might spark your thinking:

Spiritual Values: Trust Christ as Savior and Lord; Love God with a whole heart; Childlike faith; View life from God's agenda; Trust the scriptures; A contrite heart; Tenderhearted; Humble prayer; Hunger after righteousness; Fear (reverence) of God; Depend upon God; Forgiving; Full of hope; Submissive; Good Steward of Resources

Civic and Cultural Values:

Law abiding; social minded; patriotic; convictions about specific issues

Relational Values:

Respect for others; Friendly; Gracious; Compassionate; Merciful; Caring; Thoughtful; Kind; Helpful; Giving; Generous; Conflict resolution skills

Family Values:

Commitment to your spouse; Importance of grandparents and relatives

Personal Values:

Personal health convictions; Intellectual growth; Developing skills and hobbies; Cleanliness; Discipline

Character Values:

Honest; Loving; Truthful; Faithful; Trustworthy; Obedient; Teachable; Tolerant; Temperate; Patient; Loyal; Morally pure; Financially ethical; Missional mindset