



“I shall always be ready to remind you of these things...”
2 Peter 1:21

False Assumptions About Parenting

By Alex Hale

Parenting is hard. Even when a child is trained well, the child still retains free will and must ultimately be responsible for his or her own actions (see Lk. 15:11-32; Ezek. 18:20; Rom. 14:12). Godly parents hope and pray that their children will do what is right. Many parents, both godly and otherwise, have good intentions. However, as parents we can be guilty of making false assumptions. Consider a few of those with me.

Assuming that “taking the kids to church” fulfills one’s spiritual responsibility. God did not tell the church to train children; He told the parents to do it. Ephesians 6:4 is not addressed to the church – it is not written to elders, preachers, or Bible class teachers. It is written to fathers. Other passages speak of the importance of the *home* being the center of a child’s spiritual growth (Deut. 6:6-7; Prov. 22:6; 20:6). Parents have been entrusted with a great gift ... and a substantial task. A couple hours of Bible study and worship each week will not counterbalance countless hours of ungodly influence.

Assuming that it won’t affect the child when he or she hears a parent attacking the brethren. If your brother offends you, go to him *alone* (Matt. 18:15). Complaining about him or her to your family on the way to or from worship is a poor substitute. When you speak poorly of the preacher or elders in private, it shows your children a lack of regard for biblical authority. We are to be known by our love for one another (Jn. 13:35). Despising and mistreating the brethren sends a very different message, and our children will see that. If we insist on backbiting and devouring the brethren, *do not be surprised when the children choose to get away from the cycle of cannibalism!*

Assuming that what the family really needs is more money. Money is not what is lacking in most American homes. What is lacking in most homes are things like discipline, respect, love, time, attention, security, teaching, and training from parents who put God first in their lives. When parents make the pursuit of earthly riches the first priority in their home, something else must be sacrificed. One has said that many parents “are putting a dollar sign on their time with their children ... when that time is sold, it cannot be returned.” Scripture teaches that young women are to “*love their children*” and be “*workers at home*” (Ti. 2:5). The worthy woman (Prov. 31) certainly had some business dealings outside the home, but when you read about her it is obvious that she was centered on her home and family (see also Prov. 11:4; 15:16-17). Let’s be honest and stop pretending that the big wish list which keeps us working more and more is really “just for the kids.” We and our children can survive (and even thrive!) without a new jet ski, boat, Jeep, satellite TV, big screen, vacation, etc. What our children desperately need is quality time with godly parents.

Assuming that as a parent, we have to be perfect. Ainsley got a bracelet kit for Christmas – the kind that you weave together. After two days of frustration, she and I were finally able to produce a “bracelet.” It was too short and frayed at the end. I was ready to throw the whole thing in the trash. Not Ainsley, though. She put the bracelet on, hugged me, and said that she loved it. This illustrates a deeper spiritual point. While our children will notice hypocrisy, *they are not expecting perfection.* As parents, we need to own up to our shortcomings and use them as teachable moments. What our children want is what we can offer. What are we offering them?



CABOT WESTSIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST

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When We Meet

Sunday

Bible Classes – 9:00 am
 Worship – 10:00 am, 5:00 pm

Wednesday

Bible Classes – 7:00 pm

Our Elders

R.D. Hopper
 Norman Kemper

Our Deacons

Troy Hunter
 Kelly Kendall
 Tony Ramick

Our Preacher

Alex Hale