

GROWTH RESOURCES

BE A GREAT FAMILY

Illustration: A man once walked pass a building site and asked 3 different builders the same question: "What are you doing?" The one builder replied: 'I am busy laying bricks.' The other builder said: "I am making a living for myself." The last builder answered: "I am busy building a church". **We can ask the same question to parents: What are you doing?** Here are some of the answers we will receive: "I am a parent **supporting my family**. I am busy **raising my children** or **I am forming my children that they will be successful in life here on here, but also preparing them for eternal life with Jesus Christ**."

This is what God is calling us to do: To teach our children to have a relationship with Jesus Christ. (1 Cor 15:19) *If we who are [abiding] in Christ have hope only in this life and that is all, then we are of all people most miserable and to be pitied.*

We have children all over South-Africa asking the fundamental question: "**Is there a parent in my house.** Is there someone who **will love me?** Is there someone who will **give me guidance?** Is there someone who **will stick** and **not run away** and do its own thing? **Will someone please just care about me,** someone whom I can trust and depend upon?"

The question however is:

How do we become the type of parents **our children needs?**

How do we become the type of parents **God wants us to be?**

PARENTS MUST SEE THEIR CHILDREN THE WAY GOD SEES THEM

(Psalm 127:3) *Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. (v.4) as arrows are in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. (v5) Happy, blessed, and fortunate is the man whose quiver is filled with them! They will not be put to shame when they speak with their adversaries [in gatherings] at the [city's] gate.*

- Your children is not a nuisance, a pain, a disruption in your career, another mouth to be fed.
- They are a heritage, a gift that someone gave you because He loves you.
- An arrow is a metaphor for children. An arrow is something you use for your protection. It is something you pull out of your quiver at the right time for protection. If you understand the Biblical roll of a family correct, you will understand your responsibility in raising your children right when they are small, and when they are big they have more responsibility again to look after you.
- Firstly prepare your arrow, secondly aim, thirdly you release. And you release it to a specific target.
- Your children are arrows that have been entrusted to you, they are your heritage. And if you start to think this way about your children you will raise them differently.

PARENTS MUST TEACH THEIR CHILDREN 2 THINGS (1) TO OBEY (2) TO HONOUR

(Eph 6:1) *CHILDREN, OBEY your parents in the Lord [as His representatives], for this is just and right. (v.2) Honour (esteem and value as precious) your father and your mother – this is the first*

commandment with a promise. (v.3) That all may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth. (v.4) Fathers, do not irritate and provoke your children to anger [do not exasperate them to resentment, but rear them [tenderly] in the training and discipline and the counsel and admonition of the Lord.

- Everyone desires a close-knit family. It starts with commitment, goals and responsibilities.
- Guide your children to their full potential through (1) Christian discipline (2) Christian teachings.
- Don't irritate or provoke them. Don't make things difficult for them. It is hard enough growing up.
- When you have children you must understand God is only borrowing them to you and you will stand before God one day and be held accountable in regards with what you did with this precious gifts.

AS PARENT YOU MUST FOCUS ON POSITIVE GOALS

- Make decisions, prioritize your time and make impartations in your children's lives based on clear goals. – Have a clear picture in your mind in regards with what you want your children to become.
- Many parents raise their children from fear and not from clear goals. You will not be able to keep your children away from certain friends, movies, worldly things, worldly attitudes, unrighteousness, therefore your focus or God's mark for your children is: *(Rom 8:29b) He also destined from the beginning [foreordaining them] to be molded into the image of His Son [and share inwardly His likeness].*

We are sometimes so stressed about our children's career, but God is more concerned about who they become than what they do.

- The dream the world have for your child is to be happy. Do not fear that your children will have to go through the same trauma and pain that you went through, as it is these things that build character in lives. You will never be able to keep it away from them. Teach them how to handle life.
- The dream of the world is money, happiness. God's dream for your children is holiness, sanctification. You children must be taught values of determination, honesty, accountability, trustworthiness, punctuality, self-control, patience, compassion, loyalty and much more.

AS PARENTS YOU MUST PRACTISE WHAT YOU PREACH

(1 Cor 4:14) I do not write this to shame you, but to warn and counsel you as my beloved children. (v.15) After all, though you should have ten thousand teachers (guides to direct you) in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the glad tidings (the Gospel). (v.16) So I urge and implore you, be imitators of me.

- All these people tell you what you must do and have an agenda for your life. But wait, nobody of them cares about you the way I care about you. I am your spiritual father. I will tell you the difficult and hard things of life. You matter to me. I am your parent. Pray like I pray, handle anger like I do, go through difficult circumstances the way I do. Your children will never become who you tell them to become, but they will become who you are.
- You cannot impart what you don't possess. *(Luke 6:40) A pupil is not superior to his teacher, but everyone [when he is] completely trained (readjusted, restored, set to rights, and perfected) will be like his teacher.*

AS PARENTS YOU MUST BUILD BONDING RELATIONSHIPS (CONNECTEDNESS) WITH YOUR CHILDREN

(1 Thess 2:7) But we behaved gently when we were among you, like a devoted mother nursing and cherishing her own children. (v.8) So, being thus tenderly and affectionately desirous of you, we continued to share with you not only God's good news (the Gospel) but also our own lives as well, for you had become so very dear to us.

- You do not bond or connect with your children through rules and regulations, but through giving your life to them and sharing your life with them, because you love them.
- You must be real, genuine, upright and trustworthy.
- You must go with your children through life.
- You must cherish your children.

(1 Thess 2:9) For you recall our hard toil and struggles, brethren. We worked night and day [and plied our trade] in order not to be a burden to any of you [for our support] while we proclaimed the glad tidings (the Gospel) of God to you. (v.10) You are witnesses, [yes] and God [also], how unworldly and upright and blameless was our behaviour toward you believers [who adhered to and trusted in and relied on our Lord Jesus Christ]. (v.11) For you know how, as a father [dealing with] his children, we used to exhort each of you personally, stimulating and encouraging and charging you (v.13) To live lives worthy of God, Who calls you into His own kingdom and the glorious blessedness [into which true believers will enter after Christ's return].

The purpose is to live lives worthy of the kingdom of God. This is character.

A PARENT DOES THREE THINGS TO BUILD CHARACTER IN HIS CHILDREN'S LIVES

- **Exhort.** *Cheerleader.* You give your child self-confidence. Go try it out my child.
- **Encourage.** From being a positive cheerleader you encourage them: get up my child, try again. Teach your child responsibilities.
- **Charge.** I know you want to do this and that all your friends do it, but do you know this can destroy your life? I understand everybody else's parents allow their children to do that, but we do not do it. There will be consequences. I love you, I care about you and this is the end of discussion. Strong words.

8 PRACTICAL WAYS IN BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR CHILDREN

You will go through difficult seasons with your children.

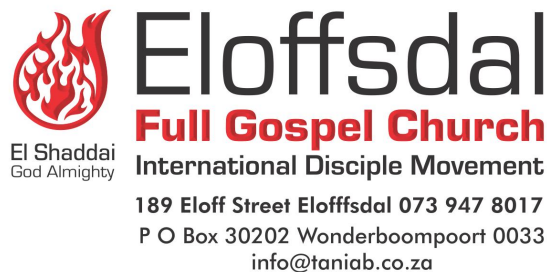
- The stronger your relationship is with you child, to that degree will your children embrace your values and believe system. The stronger the bridge, the more likely they will accept your values and believe-system and it will enter in their heads, hearts and lifestyle.
- The weaker your relationship with your children, the higher the chances that they will not embrace your values or believe-system.
- Therefore the parent that think they do many things for their children, but are emotionally disconnected from their children and have a set of rules, and the Bible and God. What does these children do? The rebel.

1. **Unconditional Love.** Tell them that you love them and do it often. When they are disobedient, make clear the consequences won't change, but you still love them. "There is nothing you can do to stop me from loving you." This is how God loves you and this is how you love your children.

2. **Scheduled Time.** Take at least once a week time-out with your children.
3. **Focus your Attention.** Don't keep on reading the newspaper when your children talks to you, otherwise your child will stop talking to you. Focus all your attention to your child when he talks to you.
4. **Make Eye Contact.** You don't think about the work or what you are going to do tomorrow when your children talks to you. If you are not making eye contact you are telling them you are not listening and you are not interested in them. And they will hear that you do not love them. Do you realize that you can go the whole day without connecting with your child? Studies showed that the average dad gives only 36 seconds of focused attention to their children per day.
5. **Meaningful Touch.** When they are small, wrestle with them. Fathers, when your teenage daughters grow up, don't stop giving them safe, non-sexual touch. Your daughters must learn that men can be safe and good and whole.
6. **Constant Communication.** This means there are times when you talk together as a family. Switch off the television, sit around a table, have eye contact and ask each other how the day was. Do this minimum 2-3 times a week. Constant communication will bring love in your family like few other things.
7. **Build good Memories having Fun Activities with your Children.** Enjoy doing things with your children. Play games with them, do fun things together, laugh, tickle, get dirty, throw water balloons etc.
8. **Pray with Them. It does not have to be long.** But pray with them. When they hear you calling out to God there is a bond that takes place. I don't know how it happens but it does.
9. **Constant Relationship Maintenance.** You will never get things perfect no matter what you do. What you do with your children now might not work in 9 months from now. It is a journey. It is a process.

AS A PARENT LEARN THE 6 MAGIC WORDS

- **I am sorry. Please forgive me.** A child must hear it.
- It is a wonderful thing to be a Christian. There is an eraser namely (1 John 1:9) *If we [freely] admit that we have sinned and confess our sins, He is faithful and just (true to His own nature and promises) and will forgive our sins [dismiss our lawlessness] and [continuously] cleanse us from all unrighteousness [everything not in conformity to His will in purpose, thought, and action].*
- We sometimes do things that hurt our children. Sometimes its neglect in one area and being too intense in another area. Acknowledge your mistakes with your children and teach them in such a way about forgiveness.



If you would like to speak to someone about your situation, we would love to help you and pray with you. Please contact the El Shaddai FGC Offices or you can email us at info@taniab.co.za