

Guiding verses: 2 Peter 1:3-9

³His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. ⁵For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

Introduction

Just as the Trojan horse was presented as a welcome gift yet carried destruction within, so today certain philosophies are quietly entering society under the guise of “wisdom” or “compassion”. Unknowing church leaders and parents can unintentionally open the gates and allow these ideas to take root in their congregations and families. Awareness and a deliberate return to Scripture are the first steps in refusing the enemy at the door.

Gentle Parenting

Definition: A method that embraces collaborative parenting with parent and child

Principles of the Gentle Parenting movement:

1. The child’s feelings should be the guide for their upbringing.
2. Children are inherently good and behavior problems are 100% due to unmet needs.
3. We can and should restore kids’ faith in themselves.
4. Parenting is meant to be a collaboration between the child and the parent.

Major clashes between Gentle Parenting philosophies and the Bible:

1. Feelings are not meant to be our rudder. (Jer 17:9, Prov. 14:12)
2. Children are not born inherently good. Children are born as fallen humans. Their natural state is listed in Rom 3: (10)15-18:
 - Romans 3:15-18 "Their feet are swift to shed blood; [16] Destruction and misery are in their ways; [17] And the way of peace they have not known." [18] "There is no fear of God before their eyes."
3. Self-control should be a higher character trait than self-esteem
 - The Bible never mentions self-esteem, but truly the opposite. Romans 12:3 — “Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.”
4. Parents are valuing being loved by their children more than being obeyed by their children. (Eph 6:1)
 - Gentle parenting’s principles also reflect the parents’ sinful desire for peace at all costs, lack of having to do the hard thing of teaching children that they are 1. Sinful and 2. Not the authority of their lives. – Two very important parts of salvation.
5. Guilt-free is gentle-parenting method’s goal.

- When will a child ever be led to repentance if they don't ever understand guilt?
- That's stealing the need for a Savior... and it's done by the parents!!!

College Selection

Takeaways:

1. Determine the best reasons to go to college:
 - a. Where is God calling the student for his career? Is college even needed for that?
 - b. What parents (and churches) teach as selection criteria for choosing a college matters:
 - i. The cheapest state school vs
 - ii. my parents' alma mater vs
 - iii. best sports team

These often don't make the student the best he can be *in Christ* at the end of the four years.
2. How could the church better prepare students to go to college?
 - a. Half of the solution of a problem is defining the problem. Understand that universities are *not* neutral ground for Christian students to learn.
 - b. Guide high schoolers – “find a church” “find your Christian community” even faster than finding your Greek at your college – (and “Greek” life can be optional too).
 - c. *Should* there be any universities who don't get a dime of a Christian's money?
3. How could the church better serve Christians who are *at* college and need the support of their spiritual life?
 - a. Do they hear from their home church?
 - b. For the colleges nearby, are their students welcome or even recruited to your church?

Adult Children Cutting Off their Parents, aka, Parental Estrangement

Definition: the distance or complete breakdown of a relationship between a parent and an adult child, characterized by a sustained lack of communication and emotional detachment.

Principles governing parental estrangement:

1. A person's mental health (lacking conflict) is priority: Unresolved family tension, anxiety or trauma need to be managed - even if it takes extreme mechanisms like complete physical and communicative break.
2. Removing the perceived source of stress can regulate one's own emotional distress.
3. Relationships are labeled as “toxic” if not affirming all areas of a person's life and boundaries should be applied.

Major clashes between Parental Estrangement and the Bible

1. Honor thy father and mother. (The LORD knew this would be an issue!)
2. Christians are called to rebuke one another, not approve all.
 - a. Iron doesn't sharpen iron without friction. (Prov 27:17)
 - b. If your brother (or mother or father) sins against you... Matt 18:15-17

- c. Rebuke one another in love (Eph 4:15)
- 3. Put others *above* yourselves. (“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.” - Phil 2:3-4)
- 4. Let he who is without sin cast the first stone. (John 7:53–8:11)

What can the church do?

- Biblical counseling (stop turning authority over to the secular therapists)
 - o Theo-centric instead of self-centric
 - o How do I make my life right with God? instead of How do I make myself feel better?
- LOVE the ones who have been abandoned
 - o Many parents of children who cut them off leave the church, feeling like failures.
 - Is this due to them loving their kids more than they love God? Or is the church leaving families feeling judged? Can the church be the hospital for the hurting?

Themes throughout these 3 trojan horses (and more, including homosexuality, transgenderism, abortions, etc.):

- Self-absorption: me me me. My feelings, my lack of courage, my happiness over my holiness.
- Therapy:
 - o Many secular therapists recommend gentle parenting.
 - o Secular therapists are the inventors of regulating stress by removal of people and situations that don’t allow happiness.
 - o Therapy websites tout “gender affirming” as a badge showing their proud beliefs.
- Authority issues.
 - o Authority in the house is out of whack.
 - o Authority of Scripture over preference has been dropped
- Lacking of Self-control
 - o We are *supposed* to have self-control. Whether we are children, adult children or adults parenting children, self-control has never been optional.
- Misplaced love.
 - o Love God and His Word.
 - o Love others

Through what doors did these Trojan horses enter?

- Secular therapy was given the authority in people’s lives.
- Social media seemed harmless.
- Educational systems were given permission to influence.
- Ai answers the secret questions of youth.
- Podcasts and “reality” stories glorify the sin, celebrating it. (Rom 1:32)

Hope

- Testimonies of overcomers –

We are more than conquerors in Christ Jesus. (Rom 8:37)

Additional resources:

Gentle Parenting isn't Biblical

- Book: *Parenting by the Book* (John Rosemond)
- Book: *Purposeful and Persistent Parenting* (John and Cindy Raquet)
- Book: *Shepherding Your Child's Heart* (Tedd Tripp)
- Podcast: *Shepherding with Strength: Biblical Parenting vs. Gentle Parenting* (Stephen Pritchett. Find on YouTube under "the Shepherd's Study", a podcast of Shepherds Theological Seminary)
- Podcast: *Why Gentle Parenting Fails* "For the Gospel" podcast by Costi Hinn

College Selection:

- Book: *Surviving Religion 101* (Michael J. Kruger)
- Book: *Not a Daycare* (Everett Piper)
- Podcast: *Grow a Spine! Conviction and Courage* on "The Sword and the Trowel", a podcast from Founders Ministries

Parental Estrangement:

- Book: *Exquisite Agony* (Gene Edwards)
- Book: *Five Lies of Our Anti-Christian Age* (Rosaria Butterfield)
- Book: *Relationships: a Mess Worth Making* (Tripp and Lane)

General (and helpful in other "Trojan horses" like "secular therapy", "the LGBTQ+ community," etc.)

- *Bad Therapy* (Abigail Shrier)
- *Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness* (Jonathan Haidt)
- *Competent to Counsel* (Gene Edwards)
- *Cross the Kitchen Table* (Sam A. Andreades) talking about trans to your teen
- *Shattered Dreams New Hope* First aid for parents whose son or daughter has embraced LGBTQ+ identity (Harvest USA)
- *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands* (Paul David Tripp)