

# Teach Your Children Well

A Sermon/Talk on Parenting at Church of All Nations

Sept. 17, 2017

## Six values parents tragically pass on to their children...and a different way

### 1. That we were born special, so we should strive to be a bit more special than others

- Being “special,” like the other values here, points inward; outward orientation is healthiest bc the brain is like a labyrinth—must not be too far from the outside/nature.
- Remind children that from dust we came, and to dust we shall return; that mortality is a gift, that living well & dying with dignity is what is important, not being special.

### 2. That our worth at any moment is equal to our achievement

- We did not bring children into the world bc the world needs more children, or bc of biological necessity. Rather, they are the fruit of our mutual love.
- Our parenting must prepare them for a world that needs love and healing far more than it needs individual achievement.
- Parental delight must not be reserved for the end product—the “successful” adult, but is in the joy, struggle, exasperation & exhilaration of the child’s developmental journey.

### 3. That we should be obsessed with personal moral purity and measurable piety

- Perfectionism is a Platonic perversity; it is not natural. God is not keeping score bc God is not a micromanager. Remember that God is perfect, not perfectionistic.
- God delights in authenticity, diversity & harmony.
- To be teachable is the greatest trait one could ever have.

### 4. That we should practice merciless self-judgment to preempt judgment by others

- Teach the children that they are inherently good, for they were made in God’s image (not original sin, a theological error Augustine unwittingly inflicted on the Western Church).
- Do not moralize children, calling them bad, naughty or sinful. Children do not have any inherent moral guilt—they only reflect the moral universe of their parents.
- Though their heart is good, we must teach that intent is distinct from impact; that our good intentions nevertheless generate positive & negative consequences.

### 5. That we should hide our faults so as not to get in trouble

- Teach that hiding is far more dangerous than any fault.
- Model resilience so that our children see how we own and handle our own faults.
- As parents, keep growing in self-regulation so that the children don't become parent-pleasers, which is gateway to becoming people-pleasers (one without a self, “floating”).

### 6. That navigating successfully around mom & dad’s insecurities/anxieties is the main task of childhood

- Aim for healthy attachment, which leads to maturity.
- Recognize that even our children can trigger unresolved trauma from our past. So it is imperative that we find constructive outlets for detragging, to lead our children with agency rather than victimization.
- As the child grows, we can disclose more and more our insecurities/anxieties and our path to healing in a developmentally appropriate way. This gives our children an example of emotional responsibility and a fruitful journey to adulthood.