



Courage to Parent

Adapted from “Courageous” series by Wayne Murray

If any country is going to be successful, the success will begin in our homes. What does success look like in our homes? Who is responsible for success in the home? Governments, organizations, schools, and churches can only be partners in building successful homes. The only hope for a successful home is when dads have the courage to adopt a missionary mindset in their home.

Consider this report:

First, a person’s moral foundations are generally in place by the time they reach age nine. While those foundations are refined and the application of those foundations may shift to some extent as the individual ages, their fundamental perspectives on truth, integrity, meaning, justice, morality, and ethics are formed quite early in life. After their first decade, most people simply refine their views as they age without a wholesale change in those leanings.

Second, a person’s response to the meaning and personal value of Jesus Christ’s life, death and resurrection is usually determined before a person reaches eighteen. In fact, a majority of Americans make a lasting determination about the personal significance of Christ’s death and resurrection by age 12.

Third, Barna showed data indicating that in most cases people’s spiritual beliefs are irrevocably formed when they are pre-teens. Upon comparing data from a national survey of 13-year-olds with an identical survey among adults, Barna found that the belief profile related to a dozen central spiritual principles was identical between the two groups. Those beliefs included perceptions of the nature of God, the existence of Satan, the reliability of the Bible, perceptions regarding the after-life, the holiness of Jesus Christ, the means of gaining God’s favor, and the influence of spiritual forces in a person’s life. “In essence,” the researcher noted, “what you believe by the time you are 13 is what you will die believing.”¹

¹ “Research Shows That Spiritual Maturity Process Should Start at a Young Age,” Barna, November 17, 2003, <https://www.barna.com/research/research-shows-that-spiritual-maturity-process-should-start-at-a-young-age/> (accessed September 6, 2017).

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COURAGE

C1: Describe your parents' communication style when you were growing up? What is your communication style with your spouse? Your children?

C2: Read and answer the following.

Deuteronomy 6:6–9 (ESV) And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

- From these verses, what can you discover from Moses' instructions?
- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, rate yourself on how well you communicate with your spouse and your children. Write out a plan to improve.

C3: John Caldwell said, "Love and affection should be the basis of any parent-child relationship. However, I believe with all my heart that good communication is the primary key to every interpersonal relationship."² Do you agree with his statement? Why or why not?

² John Caldwell, *Raising G Rated Kids In An R Rated World*, (Enumclaw, WA: Pleasant Word Publishing, 2007), 21.

STRENGTH

S1: Describe your parents' priorities growing up. What are your personal priorities? What are your priorities for your family?

S2: What measures do you use to determine whether you are a successful parent? List them.

S3: Read and answer the following.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (ESV)

- From these verses, what are the two things a dad is supposed to do with their children?
- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, rate how well you love God and impress the commands on the hearts of your children. Write out a plan to improve.

Deuteronomy 10:12-13 (ESV)

- From these verses, what measures does God use to determine a successful dad?
- How well do you live these verses out at home? How can you improve?

ENDURANCE

E1: Describe your parents' relationship with you growing up. How would you describe your relationship with your children today?

E2: Read and answer the following.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (ESV)

- What type of relationship is needed for you to fulfill these verses?

- It has been said, "Rules without relationship produce rebellion." Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?

E3: Your impact on your children's lives is proportional to the depth of relationship you have fostered with your children. On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very deep and 4 being shallow, rate yourself on the depth of your relationship with your children. Write out a plan to improve.

E4: In the next thirty days, meet with three men to develop a plan to take responsibility for your family. What was the outcome?