

“Radical Parenting, Radical Disciples”

Presentation Handout

Persecution Parenting/Discipling

- The policemen pounded on their apartment door, brandishing a search warrant.
 - After ransacking the apartment, leaving it a mess, The police warned Zamira to stop practicing their Christian faith, “All you have to do is be like everyone else. No one would come and disturb you like this.”
- Pastor Atamurat, his wife Zamira, and their three sons endured 10+ years of intense Uzbekistan government scrutiny and persecution for their Christian faith and witness, like:
 - Frequent police raids on their Christian meetings, confiscating of their cellphones and laptops, being taken along with other worshipers to police headquarters for hours of interrogation, and being fined exaggerated amounts.
 - Pastor Atamurat (in 2017) along with three other men spent 15 days in prison for their faith and church leadership.
 - They were forced to work all day in the fields with only one meal per day.
 - One was beaten, all were preached to by Islamic teachers to re-convert them to Islam.
- But this is not a presentation on Christian persecution or witnessing.
 - Yet, Pastor Atamurat & Zamira’s three sons were watching their parents’ life witness, which led their older son, Samuil, to radically follow Jesus and witness personally himself, no matter the repercussions.
 - After leading one particular student to faith in Jesus in 6th grade, Samuil began to be harassed by the police who randomly pulled him out of class for questioning.
 - Now at university, he continues to share his faith as a radical follower of Jesus!

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TAKE-AWAY: Pastor Atamurat or Zamira’s life witness led their older son to do the same as his parents. This is how parenting works. Parents’ values—what is lived, not what is necessarily spoken—are passed on to their children through their everyday life actions, words, etc.!

So each parent must take an inventory of their real values—what they live, how they live, not what they say only.

Here are some of the common goals/values parents have for their children: give them more than the parent had growing up; provide them a good education so they can support their future family with a comfortable living; shield them from heartaches, hardships, or life challenges; and for Christian parents, be a respectable Christian and member of society.

Are these values all bad? Not necessarily. Should these be the ultimate goals/focus? No. Instead, I believe it should ultimately be to help our children become radically dependent disciples of Jesus who bring honor and glory to the Father and help others know Christ!

The Ultimate Goal of Parenting: Radically Dependent Disciples

- Radically dependent disciples {*2 Timothy 1:3-5*}
 - As Paul encouraged Timothy to be bold and confident in the Lord, he reminded him of his spiritual heritage, learned from his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice.
 - This is amazing considering, it seems, Eunice was a spiritually “single” parent with a non-Christian husband {*Acts 16:1, 3*}.
 - Grandma and Mom intentionally poured into Timothy a radical dependence on Jesus, which transformed his life. This was very evident to Paul!
 - Here’s the ultimate goal of parenting!
 - What is a radical dependence on God: being satisfied with God **alone** {*Psalm 73:25-26*}, not just seeing Him as a means to an end {*John 6:10-13, (25-27)*}—He gives what I want on demand because He is big enough/powerful enough to do so.
 - Instead, one is satisfied with God even if they don’t get what they expect/want or life doesn’t play out the way they expect—no “God-jeanie” here {*Job 13:15a*}.
 - ❖ In other words, one doesn’t follow God for what He does—His blessings, etc.—but for who He is {*Psalm 42:1-2a*}.

TAKE-AWAY: So, how do parents develop this type of radically dependent discipleship life in their children? (*Insights gleaned and adapted from a Daniel Darling Christianity Today article, Dr. John Townsend, “Healing Parents and Adult Child Relationships, part 1 & 2” on YouTube & FamilyLife podcasts: “Powerful Parenting” by Jeff Norris*)

Radical Parenting

- Pray {*1 Samuel 1:10-11, 27-28a; Luke 1:11-(13); 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12*}
 - God’s love gives our children freedom of choice in a war zone commanded by an enemy {*Genesis 2:16-17; Joshua 24:15*} .
 - Freedom to make the choices they want—positive or negative. These choices make God’s heart joyful or break it, as well as their parents,
 - ❖ It’s a hard, sad, scary reality that not every child will live up to God’s plan for his/her life.
 - ❖ Meaning: not every child will experience biblical greatness—knowing, loving, and serving God, living above the world, and living an extraordinary life of mission for Him.
 - This war zone is this earth—where Satan longs to destroy our children through deception, false ideas about God, spiritual/doctrinal error, twisted worldviews, etc. And our children have the freedom to choose what they will believe, how they will live, etc.
 - ❖ In this freedom and war zone environment, prayer gives the Holy Spirit permission to work on behalf of our children, even if they are struggling spiritually or not spiritually interested at all.
 - ❖ Through parents’ prayers God is given permission to soften their children’s hearts, open and close the “doors of circumstances” to lead them into His plan, and/or galvanize their hearts in radical dependence on Him as sold-out disciples for Him.
 - ❖ This is why it’s so important for parents to commit to pray for their children!!

- Parenting is humanly impossible!
 - This is not meant to discourage parents or undermine their parenting efforts. But it's a real, true reality! Yet, this can be good news for parents!
 - ❖ This reality-check keeps parents humble in their parenting—realizing they need the Holy Spirit's power, grace, and wisdom to do this impossible "job" of parenting.
 - Remember: God loves your child(ren) infinitely more than you do, as well as wanting their spiritual success, wholeness, and their character development more than you do!
- Parents are "messed up."
 - All parents have blind spots their child(ren) will one day lament as they grow up and consider their own parenting.
 - ❖ Thankfully, without making excuses, this is where God's grace bleeds through.
 - ❖ The gaps in your parenting can be filled by your Heavenly Father as you surrender yourself and your child(ren) to Him!
 - ❖ Prayer connects parents to God and His empowering grace, which is their only source of spiritual strength to radically live for God and intentionally parent their children {*1 Corinthians 15:9-(10); 2 Corinthians 12:9a*}.
 - ❖ Never forget, amazingly, God can somehow take parents' flawed efforts and shape them for eternity!
 - Parents also struggle with misguided life priorities and values.
 - ❖ This is where God uses prayer to orientate/re-orientates parents' desires and life choices from sinful, selfish, well-meaning, and/or misguided notions to God's pure, unselfish, eternally best will/plan.
 - ❖ So, parents developing and growing in their own personal devotional/prayer life is essential for themselves and their children!
- Children are sinners (like their parents) in need of regeneration/salvation.
 - Nobody likes to think of their child(ren) as the bad kid, right?
 - ❖ Maybe this is why it's so hard for parents to see the faults of their own children while being supersonically sensitive to the faults of someone else's child(ren).
 - ❖ It's one thing to support our children, listening to their side of the story while dealing with the reality of their sinful natures and faults.
 - ✓ Maybe this blindness to one's own child(ren)'s sins/faults happens because of embarrassment (who wants a misbehaving child), cultural pressure (low self-esteem issues), or we see in our children's faults/sins, our own that we don't want to admit or deal with.
 - But if we believe what the Bible says about humanity, about the Fall, about every person's desperate need for redemptive grace, then we'll stop hurting our children by defending their sin.
 - ❖ Parents must constantly remind themselves that their children need the work of the Spirit as much as anyone else's children (and parents too).
 - ❖ Parents need to be less sensitive when it comes to criticism and/or correction, acknowledging their children are not the perfect angels they would like to think they are (ouch!).

- Teaching {*Deuteronomy 6:6-7; 11:18-20; Proverbs 4:1-5, 10-13*}
 - Biblical instruction builds a spiritual foundation in our children/grandchildren that gives direction to their spirituality and protects them from spiritual wreckage.
 - If parents don't instruct their children, someone else will. Satan will make sure of that. This is why our culture is having such a big impact on today's children—they are being taught by it, instead of by their parents.
 - ❖ Satan tries to get parents to believe they need a seminary degree to teach their children about God's love and His beautiful biblical truths or they should at least allow the church "professionals/experts" instruct their children. They're more "qualified," right? Wrong!
 - ❖ Children are looking for a word from the Lord through their parents. They want to know that their parents believe what they (children) are hearing as well as seeing it modeled—lived out in their parents' everyday lives.

TAKE-AWAY: However, remember nothing works in a parent's teaching without the Holy Spirit. This is why...

- No parenting insights, methods, strategies, etc. can do the work of the Holy Spirit!
 - Many parents are indebted to the many great Christian parenting insights, methods, strategies, etc.—me [presenter: David] included.
 - ❖ They have been very helpful and I'm glad for them! Ministries like: Family Life Today, Focus on the Family, New Life Ministry, Dr. Kevin Leman, Dr. Henry Cloud, Dr. John Townsend, etc. have shared great biblical parenting insights that have greatly helped me personally as a parent!
 - ❖ However, none of these biblical insights, methods, strategies, etc. will work without the Holy Spirit's spiritual transformation/regeneration of our children along with His blessing, leading, and wisdom in implementing them!
 - Parenting is more of a joy and less burden when the Holy Spirit is doing His work in the lives of our children, instead of parents relying on themselves.
 - ✓ The Spirit can take parents' faithful life witness and teaching, the environment they create, etc. and use them to work in the hearts and lives of their children.
 - ✓ We must remember, the Holy Spirit is the only Agent who can change our children's hearts. This is why Christian parenting must be **Christian!**
 - That's why the *Proverbs 22:6* promise is not an ironclad guarantee if we "follow the formula"—inserting our kids in one end of the Christian parenting "assembly line"—they'll come out the other end as perfectly formed Christians.
 - ❖ This is not meant to be a note of despair or to discourage parents from teaching their children. It's essential!! But this reminder is also a breath of fresh air, reminding us that our jobs as Christian parents is to be faithful with our children:
 - ✓ providing the kind of loving, nurturing, spiritual environment where **faith** can best grow,
 - ✓ sacrificing for them (Christian education),
 - ✓ disciplining and teaching them (family worship, Christian education),
 - ✓ motivating them to fulfill God's call on their lives.

❖ Yet we cannot change our children. We cannot alter their hearts. **Only God through the regenerating work of His Holy Spirit can produce** the kind of righteousness we would like to see in them!

▪ Live it {*Genesis 12:7-(8); 13:18; 2 Timothy 1:3-(5)*}

- The parenting style of: “Do as I say, don’t do as I do” doesn’t work in raising children/grandchildren to be radically dependent disciples of Jesus.
 - One of the biggest, damaging hinderances to our children is seeing their parents a part of the church, **BUT** not radically dependent on the Lord!!
 - This is why God calls His people, especially parents, to a holy life by His grace that sets them apart as exclusively (in a good sense) His in a radical faith-covenant-relationship with Himself {*1 Corinthians 3:17; 6:18-20*}.

TAKE-AWAY: Here are some practical parenting tips for Moms & Dads to “live it” before/to their children (*Adapted from two Daniel Darling Christianity Today articles*).

○ What Moms can do for their Daughters

- *Be a living spiritual role model/mentor*
 - ❖ For daughters to have a radical faith-dependence on the Lord, they must see it in their mother’s life.
 - ✓ This happens when moms intentionally teach it to them through worship, sharing their personal faith walk, exposing them to faith in the church and ministry-service to others.
 - ✓ Faith is also taught/caught as they see their moms endure by God's grace through life’s hardships or disappointments.
- *Be a woman of integrity*
 - ❖ Raise/mentor your daughters according to biblical principles.
 - ✓ Talk to them about the importance of living frugally, being Christ-like, loving others, and having a pure heart.
 - ✓ But if moms aren’t modeling it themselves, then their words are merely empty talk.
 - ✓ Instead, daughters need to see a Christ-like life lived out/modeled by their mom’s in their life every day. Then they will know it is real because mom is living/modeling it by God’s grace.
- *Be stable*
 - ❖ Daughters shouldn’t be the ones who hold mom up emotionally. This is enmeshment, which is unhealthy!
 - ✓ Sure, it's nice for a mom to have a relationship with her daughter(s) where they share with them what's on her heart. But be discerning. They’re not your therapists. Don’t share every detail of your life, like marital struggles, etc.
 - ✓ Many high school/college-aged girls feel guilty about going away to school because of how difficult it is on their moms to be away from them.
- *Let them go to grow up with your blessing*
 - ❖ Mothers, especially, have the tendency to keep their daughters close. Empty nest is a real, scary, hard emotion!

- ❖ Yet, daughters need to grow up and forge out into life on their own with mom's support and preparation. They're ultimately God's, not yours!
 - ✓ Yes, you should be there for them but not be enmeshed with them!
 - ✓ Give your daughter(s) appropriate opportunities to learn how to make decisions for themselves—self-govern their lives.
 - ✓ Give them permission to live away from you, not “next door.”
 - ✓ Rather than overprotecting them in a germ-less Christian bubble, teach and equip them in the love of God, the truths of the Gospel, and help them discover and use their spiritual gifts and talents for service.
- **What Moms can do for their Sons**
 - *Nurture faith*
 - ❖ Encourage your son(s) to draw close to Jesus in faith through:
 - ✓ reading and discussing Bible stories with them,
 - ✓ participating in a local church *with* them,
 - ✓ giving them opportunities to help people in need,
 - ✓ talking with them about how God is working in your own life,
 - ✓ encouraging them to ask difficult questions and deal honestly with their doubts,
 - ✓ practicing what you preach, and
 - ✓ urging them to take the "risks" God is leading him to take.
 - *Help them develop godly characters*
 - ❖ God cares first about their characters than what they do professionally.
 - ✓ He wants to help them to grow to become more like Jesus every day by using you to help instill in them character traits such as: honesty, perseverance, hospitality, commitment, loyalty, respect for others, kindness, patience, self-control, gratitude, and faithfulness.
 - ❖ Ask God to show you what core values He wants you to focus on while teaching them to become gentleman who please God and serve others.
 - *Help them manage their emotions*
 - ❖ Help them learn how to deal appropriately with their ever-changing emotions of happiness, sadness, enthusiasm, disappointment, guilt, anger, fear, etc.
 - ❖ Pray for strength to respond calmly and lovingly to their emotional ups and downs.
 - ❖ Help them learn to express their feelings clearly and constructively to solve problems well through listening carefully to all of their thoughts and feelings, asking open-ended questions, giving them your full attention, and not interrupting even if you disagree.
 - *Launch/release them into manhood*
 - ❖ Mothers, especially, have the tendency to keep their sons close. Empty nest is a real, scary, hard emotion!
 - ❖ Prepare them to launch into adulthood so they can live independently from you while dependently relying on God by teaching them the skills they'll need to live well on their own. They're ultimately God's, not yours!
 - ✓ Give them permission to live away from you, not “next door.”
 - ❖ Ask God to show you His purpose for their lives, and then focus on training and equipping them to become the godly man God wants them to be.

- ✓ Rather than overprotecting them in a germ-less Christian bubble, teach and equip them in the love of God, the truths of the Gospel, and help them discover and use their spiritual gifts and talents for service.
 - ❖ Center your own life around God, not your son(s).
 - ✓ Don't wait until they grow up to take care of your health, your marriage (if married), and/or develop and use your God-given spiritual gifts and talents to contribute to the world around you.
 - ✓ Remember, sons are not supposed to "fix" Mom's personal life issues. That's not fair or healthy. It's enmeshment.
- **What Dads can do for their Daughters**
 - *Remind them they are beautiful and loved.*
 - ❖ Daughters who know their fathers love them:
 - ✓ grow up with more confidence, tending to not look for love in all the wrong places.
 - ✓ interact in more healthy ways with men and ultimately their husbands.
 - ❖ Ladies/young ladies, remember, if you didn't receive this love from your father, your heavenly Father who always loves you perfectly will give you the self-worth and beauty you need. He will be your Father in a way that your earthly father was not!
 - *Let them know their Mother is beautiful and loved (if married).*
 - ❖ The best gift you can give to your daughter(s), if married, is to treat their mother with love and respect; or if not married, respect the girls/ladies around you like a Christian gentleman should.
 - ❖ Many girls/women don't know how they should be treated because they've never seen a healthy example of a father/grandfather respecting a woman.
 - ✓ As a result many females disrespect themselves and/or settle for relationships that are unhealthy, sometime even abusive.
 - *Remind them they belong to God, created for His glory.*
 - ❖ Girls frequently battle with insecurity over a number of issues: weight, looks, friends, etc.
 - ✓ This unbiblical, unhealthy pressure from Satan through our culture is why fathers need to remind their daughters often they are God's special creation formed lovingly in His image.
 - ❖ Fathers should to the best of their ability "protect" their daughters against our culture's pressure to sexualize girls/ladies by seeing them simply as physical objects for male perversion.
 - *Let them know they are forgiven.*
 - ❖ Let your daughters know when they sin, Jesus is ready to forgive them with fresh supplies of His grace.
 - ❖ Gently remind them they must apply this forgiving grace to their lives personally as well as giving it to others.
 - ✓ Then they'll be able to live in the freedom of His grace and forgiveness, growing in Him day by day!.
- **What Dads can do for their Sons**
 - *Tell them how much you love them.*
 - ❖ Yes, even sons need to hear this!

- ❖ Behind the tough exterior of boys/men is a “marshmallow” heart longing to experience the love of their fathers.
 - ✓ Without this love-affirmation boys/men can carry deep wounds (*unless healed by God*) that negatively affect their most important relationships for the rest of their lives.
- *Share how proud you are of them.*
 - ❖ Many men live their lives in search of their father's approval—approval they never received growing up.
 - ✓ As a result, deep down in their hearts they wonder: *Am I good enough? Did I make it? Is Dad proud of me?*
 - ✓ This emptiness can also cause them to wonder: *Am I good enough for God? Does God approve of me?*
- *Let them know hard work and faithfulness is good.*
 - ❖ Our culture presents such a confusing picture of manhood.
 - ✓ Pop culture tells boys/young men they're unnecessary by teaching them the best they can do is idle away their adolescence/young adulthood by satisfying their sexual urges, simulating warfare with a joystick, or drifting through life without any aspirations.
 - ❖ This isn't God's plan! True Christian manhood/masculinity involves:
 - ✓ developing a Christian character of nobility, strength, sacrifice, courage, faithfulness, and responsibility,
 - ✓ respecting girls/women by honoring them without exploiting them, and
 - ✓ pursuing God's calling He has stamped upon their lives, which is best discovered through intimacy with God and serving the world's deepest needs.
- *Remind them they're gifted, but not God.*
 - ❖ Imbue your son(s) with a sense of godly confidence, approval, and dignity.
 - ❖ But also remind them, while gifted by God, they're **not** God.
 - ✓ Genuine Christian masculinity doesn't strut but humbly bows and serves—picking up a towel and washing feet, like Jesus *{John 13:1-5}*.
 - ❖ Real men know their strength isn't found in their exploits or what people think of them, but in a growing, personal faith-relationship with God!!

Resources

- Boundaries books [\[boundariesbooks.com\]](http://boundariesbooks.com): for children, teens & young adults-adults by Drs. Henry Cloud & John Townsend. YouTube videos: “*Healing Parents and Adult Child Relationships, #1 & 2*”
- Christian Parenting [\[christianparenting.org\]](http://christianparenting.org): Multiple parenting resources, podcasts, etc.
- FamilyLife ~ Art of Parenting [\[artofparenting.com\]](http://artofparenting.com): parenting seminar with videos & workbook.
- Focus on the Family [\[focusonthefamily.com\]](http://focusonthefamily.com): many parenting & family resources

LIVING CHOICE: Will you by God's grace commit to raise your children (grandchildren) to be radical disciples of Jesus following His biblical parenting principles?