

Top 5 Mistakes Parents Make

4.27.08 morgan young

Good morning, my name is “**Home Depot Dan**”(drama reference)...I brought my Makita 18v compact drill with me...this is one handy tool...probably one of my most used tools.

There are times when I’m using it to put things together that came with instructions like some **wooden Adirondack chairs**.

And I’ve used it recently to build some new workbenches from scratch.

And I notice that **things that come with instructions** go together much **quicker**, much **easier** than projects I’m creating from scratch:

Put board “B” next to board “C” and attach with screw “3.”

Don’t you wish raising kids came with instructions?

For some reason I think even if they did I’d get the ones for a “model” I don’t have.

“Honey—these are for an **analytical, logic-driven** boy—where are the “**right brain**” 15 yr old girl instructions?” ///

At this church we love kicking off series’ like this one because we are a staff with **lots of parents** that are trying to figure out how to **raise kids that didn’t come with instructions**.

And at the same time we are **sons and daughters** of people who parented us, living with everything they got right and the things they didn’t. ///

(*sarcasm*)
You need to know that I am **Kokomo’s foremost authority on parenting**.

I’ve written **countless books** on the subject.

Have extensive degrees in child psychology.

Dr Phil calls me weekly just to get as he calls it, “Wisdom from the Big Kahuna of child raising.”

Actually when **topics were dished out** I think someone said, “Top 5 Parenting Mistakes?” No doubt **Morgan’s made all those—give it to him!** ;-)//

SLIDE ONE:

1. Expecting the church to spiritually raise your children.

*“Fathers (parents), don’t **exasperate** your children by coming down hard on them. **Take them by the hand and lead them in the way of the Master.**”*

Ephesians 6:4 The Message

When this verse was written, it introduced a fresh concept into parenting---which was to take into account the **feelings of the child**. This was written in a society where the father’s authority was absolute---right or wrong he was not to be questioned.

So the first part of this verse tells parents, to be **aware of our children’s emotions**—and to avoid being an **extreme disciplinarian** so we don’t overwhelm or exasperate them.

The second part of the verse, is also historically a new concept:

To “**lead them in the way of the Master**” is not about “strict discipline,” but rather it’s leading them in the **ways of relating with Christ**.

And yes, (on one hand) we **are** training them in **rules for living, principals and virtues**---but **all in the context of a relationship with God.**

This is very important---because the big picture of Christianity **isn't about keeping rules**, and working from a list of "**good things**" and avoiding this list of "**bad things**."

Christianity is about mysteriously living IN RELATIONSHIP with God—or "**The way of the Master**" as Ephesians 6:4 said.

As for the church---we ARE here to help. **To equip. To teach you, to teach your children** —even creating a KidStuf ministry for you to attend together...

But God clearly says in Ephesians 6:4 that spiritually raising children is **on the parents**.

God has **given** them to **you**.

He's **entrusted** them to **you**.

He's **blessed** your life with them.

God's plan is for the **church to help**, but **you—the parent**---have the responsibility to lead them in the **ways of Christ**.

We get them for **an hour**—maybe two.

Our influence is "this big"(tiny). Your influence is "THIS BIG"(huge).

So don't expect the church to spiritually raise your child. Instead, you "**take them by the hand and lead them in the Way of the Master.**"

And that leads right into the second mistake parents make:

SLIDE TWO:

2. "Do as I say, not as I do."

"God-loyal people, living honest lives, make it **much easier** for their children."

Proverbs 20:7 The Message

"God-loyal" means parents who believe in God and are living out their faith. Christianity is not just something they "say"—it's something they "do."

And the second part of this proverb says that if we're trying to live a life that honors God—not a PERFECT life—(cause there are **none** of those)

but if we're **trying** to live life that's centered in a relationship with Christ---God says that life will go better for our children.

This point is all about **authenticity**. Authenticity is reflected in those clichés:

"More is caught than taught."

"Actions speak louder than words."

The **right words** don't make us good parents. **The right words that MATCH our actions**, make us good parents. (repeat)

And in some ways I think this is one of the hardest dynamics of parenting. Because I'll bet a paycheck that most of us **know the right answers, most of the time**. We know the right things to **say**.

But living a life that **reflects our words**, is "much easier on our children," because our example is much easier to follow—less confusing.

My son Slater is 12 and is playing his last year of Little League.



And I've been trying to teach him about leadership---telling him that the little kids will be looking at him----and that leading **isn't about your words**, it's about **leading by example**—"so you have work hard in every practice and every game."

The other day I asked him, "**How's it going trying to be a leader?**"
He paused for a second and said, "**It's hard.**"

And he's right. It's easy to say it and hard to live it.

And the reason Slater can be a leader is because he's been playing ball for 8 years now. He's been there so he knows how it goes.

And that's just like the life principle:

"You can't take people where you haven't been."

Which means we can't lead our children to use **clean language** unless we use clean language.

We can't lead our children to be people who make **wise choices** unless we make wise choices.

We can't lead our children in a **relationship with Christ** unless we ourselves are fumbling through a relationship with Christ.

(from "[Do as I Say, not as I Do](#)" from **Sonia Manzano** on Sesame Street website)

"When our child Gabriela was born, Richard and I made ourselves a promise not to curse in front of her. It seemed to us that out of habit we always peppered our every conversation with 'BLEEP'...and we didn't want Gabi doing that. So we stopped cursing entirely. It worked. We are the proud parent's of a 12-year-old who not only *never* curses herself—but who also takes great offense when she hears someone else curse! Clearly, we succeeded. The only problem is that now that we feel we can go back to our pre-Gabi cursing days, we've forgotten how. But that's all right. Our children influence us."

That's a great simple illustration of how **we need to live it**, so our kids can **learn it**---how authentic parenting "goes easier for our children."

And if you're here today and you're not even sure about God, let alone following Him. Then start where you are.

If there's something your child's doing that you **don't** like---first, look and see how you're modeling it.

And if you're **not** doing great in that area—**go after it**—start getting better **today** in that **one** area.

We don't change **our life** or **our children's** in a magical flash—change happens one little decision at a time, done repeatedly.

So as parents, let's try to lead an authentic "**Do as I do**" life—and as Proverbs 20:7 says, we will "make it much easier on our children."

SLIDE THREE:

3. Running the same play.

"Fathers, (parents) do not aggravate your children or they will become discouraged."

Colossians 3:21 nlt

Every parent has a child that does things that **drive you up a wall**. Think of that kid and think of that deal right now...



Here's your thought balloon,

"Why is she doing that again?!!"

That's what we instantly think right before we verbally launch into the same thing we've said **267** times.

As you're talking **LOUDLY** and your child is **rolling their eyes & not listening** to anything you're saying---here's their thought balloon,

"Why is she saying that again?!!"

If the child keeps doing the same thing. And **YOU** the parent keep reacting the same way, the result is the same insane cycle. Here's a mathematical equation for us:

(MS)

same + same = same

(same behavior + same reaction = same ol' thing)

This is where I as a parent am at my most stupid.

It's like the stereotype of the **American** who's trying to order at a **restaurant** in a **foreign country** and **doesn't know the language**.

They just keep saying the same thing, but LOUDER and SLOWER:

I SAID I WANT THE CHEESE OMELETTE BUT WITHOUT THE SCHNITZEL!!!

I SAID IT'S SATURDAY AND YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO GET YOUR CHORES DONE!!!

Here's a great question for you: **How LOUD is your parenting?**

If your **pets** are **wearing earplugs** it may be time to run a new play.

If you are yelling a lot, then the kids are now driving your behavior(repeat)
...a lot of yelling usually indicates that you need some new parenting ideas.

And on the flip side. Maybe your parenting **is not loud at all**.

Maybe it's polite...too polite.

Maybe the **pets** at your house are **rolling their eyes** because they hear:

"Billy...Billy...Billy...Billy...1...Bill---2...Billy...2 ¼...2 ½ ...Billy...2 5/8...Billy"

Parenting will always get into ruts. Same + same = same.

It's up to us as parent to run a new play. There are two sides to these deals and when we respond to our children in the **same INEFFECTIVE way**--- Colossians is **spot-on** when it says we **aggravate and discourage** our child.

"Morgan—give me a break—my **KID's** aggravated?! He's driving **ME NUTS!**"

Yes. But WE are the adults. It's **our responsibility** to seek out and find new ways of solving old problems. Here are some ways to find new plays:

- Read a **book** (TONS out there)
- **Internet** (links on back)
- Seek out a **mentoring couple** that's further down...
- See a **counselor**.

And in & through all these things, without a doubt, **we need to pray—that's a given**.

But please hear me in this:

There is a tendency in Christianity when we have a problem to say, "**I'm praying about this...**"

I ran across this Amish saying that I love:

"Praying is good, but praying doesn't plow the field." -Amish saying

Parenting requires us to (plow the field) **do the work** of finding out **what** works with our children. It IS work because **every child is different** (by God's design & in His image) and there are **no instruction manuals**.

We have to do the work of learning how to parent because as our children get older, the way we parent has to change. Do teenagers need to be parented differently than grade schoolers? Oh boy...

"Adolescence is a period of rapid changes. Between the ages of 12 and 17, for example, a parent ages as much as 20 years." -author unknown

Learning how to relate-with and parent our kids as they grow is **our** responsibility. If we sit back and parent **as we always have**, while our children **change**, we will certainly aggravate them and ourselves.

Run a **new** play:

- Read a book
- Internet
- Seek out a mentoring couple
- Talk w/a counselor

“Praying is good, but praying doesn’t plow the field.”

SLIDE FOUR:

4. Not disciplining well.

A refusal to correct is a refusal to love; love your children by disciplining them.

Proverbs 13:24 The Message

This made my top 5 simply because when the Bible talks about parenting, “**discipline**” is one of the most frequent topics---and anytime God is repetitive, He’s trying to make sure we get the point.

THE concept on **biblical discipline** is that it’s **always in the context of love**.

“What?? I thought disciplining was getting mad at your kids?”
No, that’s **anger**, not discipline.

Discipline is:

- Training
- Correcting
- Bringing under control
- Punishing appropriately

I got some feedback from a teacher with 30+ years of experience. She said,

“I’m amazed when parents say they can’t get their 3 yr old to stay in his bed. Or when you see a parent **losing an argument with a toddler**. As long as I can pick you up, you **will** do as I say. And it’s best to teach them that **they will do as you say** while you can still pick them up, because someday they will peer down at you.”

Disciplining well is about **expectations** and **consequences**. It’s about letting little kids and big kids know what we expect—being very clear about it.

And a consequence **isn’t** always something **negative**.

Whenever kids do the right things, the consequence should be **AFFIRMATION**. We should catch them doing things right.

(“*poo-poo potty*”—do it appropriately for older kids)

And when they **do** the **wrong thing**, punishment is an appropriate biblical consequence.

“Do I spank?”

It’s up to you to discern. Biblically it’s not wrong. What’s important is to **know your child** and what **speaks to them**. And to always discipline out of love, not out of anger.

And don't make the mistake of thinking that a spanking is brutal and other methods are **less** damaging. There are adults walking around their entire adult life with the **scars of words**. And at the same time there are adults walking around who've been paddled who have **no** emotional or physical scars.

(so) Know your kids—each one is different---you can mortify some kids with a **look**. For some kids a swat on the backside does wonders.

The important thing is to appropriately deal with the wrong behavior—DON'T LET IT GO. Love them enough to enforce appropriate discipline.///

And here's some advice from some professors at Yale University Parenting and Child Conduct Clinic:

When children aren't behaving well, telling them to STOP or just telling them NO is not effective.

Instead of telling them NO, we need to push the POSITIVE OPPOSITE of the bad behavior.

So don't just **tell** your son to stop hitting his sister. Tell your son,

"When you get mad at your sister, I want you to **use words** or **come tell me** about it. No matter what, I want you to **keep your hands to yourself**."

For any age child, don't just tell them NO —don't just say, "STOP IT!"---an effective way to discipline is to be clear about what you WANT THEM TO DO. ///

And one of the biggest reasons we need to discipline well is because
discipline will always be a part of life even as adults:

My child, don't reject the LORD's discipline, and don't be upset when he corrects you. For the LORD corrects those He loves, just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights.

Proverbs 3:11-12 nlt

(explain verse—"My child" is an adult—God disciplines us through our whole life)

When we discipline well, we are teaching our kids to receive **constructive feedback**---a skill **every adult desperately needs**.

When we discipline well, we're teaching them HUMILITY—that they **don't always know** what's right and they NEED OTHER PEOPLE to help them become who God wants them to be.

A refusal to correct is a refusal to love; love your children by disciplining them.
Proverbs 13:24

SLIDE FIVE:

5. Not modeling love well.

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

1 Peter 4:8

Life is really only about TWO things...

Learning to love God. And learning to love people. (1 John 4:21)

This sounds radically simple & theoretically it is. But this is where it gets hard:

As parents we have to **learn to love God**---so much so, that somehow our love for Him **transforms how we live**. Because we don't change our lives because we're trying to keep a bunch of **biblical rules**.

Our life changes because we want to **love God back** for all the ways He's loved and IS loving us.

And when we realize that Jesus **hung on a cross to wipe out our sin** and to bring us into relationship with Himself---grace changes how we love other people—even our kids.

Loving our kids is the **easiest** thing to do when they're **teeny**—cute, dressed up in frilly dresses or like little men.

But as some kids grow up---(can we be real here?)---they choose behaviors that aren't as cute.

Sometimes teenagers appear to become totally different people---people who's actions aren't always...
(*searching*) **endearing**.

And kids grow up and **move out of the house** and now they finally make decisions about how THEY want to live life—and we don't understand---it doesn't make sense to us.

And sometimes as parents—in our heart of hearts—it can be **hard** to love our kids through the choices they're making or have made.

Jesus was great at **hating the sin and loving the sinner**.

But for us as parents--- if we're not careful, the **disdain** we have for our kid's **actions** affects how much we express and communicate love to them.

We foolishly think, "If I **withhold my love**, they'll notice and they'll change."

But then they don't change. And we think, "They **don't** love me."

(then) we consciously or unconsciously stop loving them...

And if we go to church this really **screws with a kids head** because what we're doing doesn't look like **unconditional** love. Because it isn't.

As parents we love well, by realizing the what our kids DO is **not** who they ARE.

They are blessings God has given to us —so we **love them in our words and love with our actions**.

We **don't** have to love the **behavior** or the **choices**, but we must always love the person...That's how we model love well.

because our children are uniquely made in the image of God. A God who radically loves us so that we can radically love others---even kids we don't understand. ///

I want to wrap this up by talking about **forgiveness and grace**. Because I am sure of one thing: **There are no perfect parents**. As hard as we're trying, we're all goofing it up.

I was communicating with a Christian counselor about this talk and he wrote this about parents:

"Don't never confess. Show humility by asking for forgiveness. When you're wrong—simply admit it---kids already know you're wrong (anyway)."

Parenting is **not about being right**.

Parenting is about **modeling integrity**---and that means when we are too **amped up** when we were "disciplining" our child---go back (hour later, day later)---suck it up---and tell them we're sorry.

(Tell Kentucky story about mom & me...)

Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it.

Col 3:13 The Message

Parents forgive your kids...

Kids forgive your parents...

Spouses forgive each other...