

**Marriage and Family: Enjoying The Journey**  
**301: Healthy Friends and Family / Part – 2 Parenting, Step Parenting, Grand-  
Parenting & Mentoring Essentials**

**LESSON 10: Developing Character In Kids**  
**Guest Speaker – Anthony Thomas**

**1 - We must parent with an eye to the Future!**

Questions – Is what you are doing being done on purpose?  
What do you hope your child becomes? What will describe their character?

**2 - Eight Key Aspects Of Character**

To develop a child of good character, we must be parents of good character.  
What does good character look like?

**2.1 Others Centered – Or Loving.**

Do they follow the Golden Rule, and the Platinum Rule?

***John 13:34 – 35***

*34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

Illustration of a Mother – The Platinum Rule...

**2.2 Responsible – Taking ownership of life.**

***Matt. 5:16***

*In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*

Illustration – Morning routine vs. screen time; Weekend chores vs. shopping with friends.

**2.3 Assertive – Avoid passive living.**

Football Coach Illustration - The nice thing about football is that you have a scoreboard to show how you've done. In other things in life, you don't. At least, not one you can see.

***Zechariah 8:16***

*These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other*

***Gal 6:9***

*Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

Illustration - Several years ago, I heard the story of Larry Walters, a 33-year-old man who decided he wanted to see his neighborhood from a new perspective. He went down to the local army surplus store one morning and bought forty-five used weather balloons. That afternoon he strapped himself into a lawn chair, to which several of his friends tied the now helium-filled balloons. He took along a six-pack of beer, a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich, and a BB gun, figuring he could shoot the balloons one at a time when he was ready to land.

Walters, who assumed the balloons would lift him about 100 feet in the air, was caught off guard when the chair soared more than 11,000 feet into the sky -- smack into the middle of the air traffic pattern at Los Angeles International Airport. Too frightened to shoot any of the balloons, he stayed airborne for more than two hours, forcing the airport

to shut down its runways for much of the afternoon, causing long delays in flights from across the country.

Soon after he was safely grounded and cited by the police, reporters asked him three questions:

"Where you scared?" "Yes."

"Would you do it again?" "No."

"Why did you do it?" "Because," he said, "you can't just sit there."

#### **2.4 Courage** – Overcoming Fear & Stepping Out.

**1Pet 2:12**

*Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.*

**1Cor 16:13**

*Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.*

Courage Illustration - Hugh Lattimer once preached before King Henry VIII. Henry was greatly displeased by the boldness in the sermon and ordered Lattimer to preach again on the following Sunday and apologize for the offence he had given. The next Sunday, after reading his text, he thus began his sermon: "Hugh Lattimer, dost thou know before whom thou are this day to speak? To the high and mighty monarch, the king's most excellent majesty, who can take away thy life, if thou offendest. Therefore, take heed that thou speakest not a word that may displease. But then consider well, Hugh, dost thou not know from whence thou comest--upon Whose message thou are sent? Even by the great and mighty God, Who is all-present and Who beholdeth all thy ways and Who is able to cast thy soul into hell! Therefore, take care that thou deliverest thy message faithfully." He then preached the same sermon he had preached the preceding Sunday--and with considerably more energy.

Following Christ Illustration: I have the job recently of challenging several couples related to their decision to live together prior to marriage. I have been amazed lately how people who have the courage to step out in faith have been blessed by God.

#### **2.5 Wisdom** – Good Judgment.

**Act 6:3**

*Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them*

Theodore Levitt, Harvard Business School - Experience comes from what we have done. Wisdom comes from what we have done badly.

Illustration - An angel appears at a faculty meeting and tells the dean that in return for his unselfish and exemplary behavior, the Lord will reward him with his choice of infinite wealth, wisdom or beauty. Without hesitating, the dean selects infinite wisdom.

"Done!" says the angel, and disappears in a cloud of smoke and a bolt of lightning. Now, all heads turn toward the dean, who sits surrounded by a faint halo of light. At length, one of his colleagues whispers, "Say something."

The dean looks at them and says, "I should have taken the money."

## **2.6 Integrity** – Honesty.

**Act 24:16**

*In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men.*

In the Book – The Day America Told The Truth the question was posed: What are you willing to do for \$10,000,000? Two-thirds of Americans polled would agree to at least one, some to several of the following:

Would abandon their entire family (25%)

Would abandon their church (25%)

Would become prostitutes for a week or more (23%)

Would give up their American citizenships (16%)

Would leave their spouses (16%)

Would withhold testimony and let a murderer go free (10%)

Would kill a stranger (7%)

Would put their children up for adoption (3%)

## **2.7 Perseverance** – Ability to overcome obstacles of life.

**Luke 8:15**

*But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.*

Illustration - In 1962, Victor and Mildred Goertzel published a revealing study of 413 "famous and exceptionally gifted people" called Cradles of Eminence. They spent years attempting to understand what produced such greatness, what common thread might run through all of these outstanding people's lives. Surprisingly, the most outstanding fact was that virtually all of them, 392, had to overcome very difficult obstacles in order to become who they were.

Illustration - "A sound body, a brilliant mind, a cultural background, a huge amount of money, a wonderful education -- none of these guarantee success. Booker T. Washington was born in slavery. Thomas Edison was deaf. Abraham Lincoln was born of illiterate parents. Lord Byron had a club foot. Robert Louis Stevenson had tuberculosis. Alexander Pope was a hunchback. Admiral Nelson had only one eye. Julius Caesar was an epileptic. But these men made history in spite of their handicaps. And there was Louis Pasteur, so near-sighted that he had a difficult time finding his way in his laboratory without glasses. There was Helen Keller, who could not hear or see, but who graduated with honors from a famous college.

## **2.8 Submitted To God** – Being grounded in God.

**Matt. 6:33**

*But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.*

**Heb 13:17**

*Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.*

Illustration – Faith is something you can't make happen for your children. Two months ago I took Gabe out on a daddy day. I shared the gospel with him. He was literally more interested in video games. A month later he prayed to receive Christ...

### 3 - **Reality** Consequences:

**Life works on reality consequences.**

Avoid psychological and relational consequences.

Engage reality consequences.

Illustration - A pig ate his fill of acorns under an oak tree and then started to root around the tree. A crow remarked, "You should not do this. If you lay bare the roots, the tree will wither and die." "Let it die," said the pig. "Who cares as long as there are acorns?"

Sometimes we don't see the connection between our actions and life's results. Helping children get the connection while they are children is a great blessing.

### 4 - **The Law of Sowing and Reaping!**

*Gal. 6:7*

*Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.*

#### 4.1 **The goal of parenting**

**Is not...** To control the child into doing what you want, or to "make them" behave.

**The goal of Parenting is...**

To give children the choice to do what they want.

But, to make it painful when they choose poorly.

*Gal. 5:22-2*

*"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."*

#### 4.3 **The formula for the Law of Sowing and Reaping is...**

To give children freedom,

& to allow choices,

To manage the consequences accordingly,

& to heap on praise and increase the freedoms as appropriate.

But, when your children make bad choices... Allow them to feel pain.

Empathize with their loss

& to Avoid the "I told you so's"

#### 4.4 **The Recipe:**

Grace (Unmerited Favor) + Truth (Structure) / Time = Solid Character

#### 4.5 **The Balance:**

Parenting means...

Giving freedom, Requiring responsibility, &

Rendering consequences while being loving throughout.

### **Small Group Questions:**

- 1 – What aspects of Character do you think is the hardest to instill in children?
- 2 – How large of a role do you think parents play in helping to develop character in children?
- 3 – Have you seen the Law of Sowing and Reaping at work in your own family?
- 4 – Where do you need the most help and prayer in implementing a new direction?
- 5 – What do you hope to take away and apply from this session?