



Week Four: How to Raise Kids – Study Guide

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When thinking of parenting, it's quite humorous, and disturbing at the same time, to look at the animal kingdom. Some animals are horrible parents, like the harp seal, who leaves its young after only 12 days to continue mating, or the cuckoo bird, who commonly tricks other birds into raising its hatchlings by placing its eggs in foreign nests. And you can't leave out the cuddly black bear, which requires two or three babies to be born for it to deem that it is worth the time and energy to take on parenting. A single cub will most assuredly be abandoned. There are other examples in the animal kingdom, like the elephant mother, whose pregnancy lasts 22 months, followed by many more months of care since the babies are born blind. Or even the orangutan, whose parenting lasts a full two years. But however you look at it, none compare to the care required in our human parenting experience. For years we humans cannot feed, provide for, or protect ourselves, and for many years beyond that, we continue to need love, guidance, and encouragement. However, it's not as cut and dried as even that may sound. Parenting is complex. This week, in part 4 of *Family Dynamics*, we will attempt to learn more about what the Bible has to say about parenting in a different sort of kingdom, God's kingdom.

Where Am I Today?

- 1) If you are a parent, what one word would you use to describe your experience? If you have not experienced parenting, what one word would you use to describe what it was like for those that raised you? Are you a single parent, married parents, or expecting parents?

FAMILY DYNAMICS

WEEK FOUR: HOW TO RAISE KIDS - STUDY GUIDE

- 2) When you first started the journey of parenting, did you have a plan? How open were you to advice? Of course, some advice will not work for everyone, but what would you like to have known prior to taking on the role of a parent?

- 3) Have you sought after God in the area of parenting? If so, would you say it is periodically or continually? Would you classify yourself as a good parent?

Into the Bible

- 4) Discipline. Read **Proverbs 13:18,24** and **29:15-17**. What do these verses say about discipline? What are some forms of child discipline, meaning correction, punishment, or chastisement? Can parents discipline out of love and not out of anger? Give your insight. Do you feel specific methods of discipline work the same for all children?

- 5) Read **Hebrews 12:5-11**. What does this say about our discipline from the Father?

- 6) Consistency. With so many elements to parenting, to be excellent at everything that's required is pretty much impossible. However, we can naturally shine in some areas, resulting from our personality or from our life experiences. For me, my sweet spot is consistency. The funny thing is, not only do I see how consistency has played out in the lives of my children, but also with our pets! Please don't confuse this for any type

FAMILY DYNAMICS

WEEK FOUR: HOW TO RAISE KIDS - STUDY GUIDE

of study about pet parenting. However, the point is that YOU are the one that sets the expectations in the home. Read **Philippians 1:27** and **Hebrews 13:8**. What are some examples of living a consistent life? What is the benefit of being consistent in your parenting? What are some signs from your children that suggest you are not consistent? (Keep in mind with your answers that age of the child greatly determines their level of responsibility in behavior.)

- 7) Boundaries. "Do not play near the street!" "Don't you dare cross the road without me, Mister!" Oh, how many times did I hear that as a child! You may remember something similar. Boundaries are for our kids' protection. Of course, it seems unpleasant for them at the time; however, wisdom and responsibility have to be developed. It's not that the road itself is evil, or the traffic, but for a young child a road can be deadly. Read **Hebrews 12:11**. List an example of a parenting boundary for an infant, a toddler, a teen, and a college student. How does it protect them?
- 8) Life Lessons. Read **Proverbs 1:8-9 and 22:6, Deuteronomy 6:5-7, Exodus 12:14** and **James 2:17-18**. Are we instructed to be teachers for our children? How much do they learn from what we DO, versus what we SAY? Give an example of something that may be verbally taught by a parent, but their actions do not support it.

FAMILY DYNAMICS

WEEK FOUR: HOW TO RAISE KIDS - STUDY GUIDE

How Does This Apply?

- 9) When looking at our role in biblical parenting, we typically see that the greatest achievement would be for our children to grow up in a saving relationship with Jesus. Then we are left contemplating how we best help them get there. Today we talked through some important aspects of parenting, like discipline, consistency, boundaries, and teaching; and even that list is not complete. How can we truly measure the success of our parenting? How much and what can we realistically control? What do you think the difference was with how the two sons turned out in **Genesis 4:1-10**?
- 10) One of the greatest gifts we can give our children is how we model relationships. As husband and wife, are your children learning from you or are they steering you? Last week we talked about rekindling the flame in our marriages. Are our children learning this by our example, or are they learning how they can interrupt at will and place themselves in the #1 spot above husband or wife? If God is telling you to relocate to a different city or state, are you refusing because the kids do not want to change school districts? These are very tough concepts, but when applied properly, they can be some of the most valuable lessons for a child. Read **Genesis 19:12-16**. Was Lot's family in danger? To whom did the angels give the instruction?

Increase Your Learning on Your Own

- 11) We get some of our best application in parenting by watching how God parents us. Read **Galatians 3:19, 23-25**. Verse 24 states that the law was our "Paidagogos," meaning schoolmaster, guardian, or parental figure. What was this "overseer's" role? Why was the law needed? If sin is left unpaid, what does God have every right to do? If Israel had been without this guardian to set aside their sins, and had rightfully died because of their transgressions, who would not have been born? Do you see the concept of boundaries in parenting here? Can you see the purpose now for the law and why Paul states we are no longer in need of this guardian?