

Golden Truths about Parenting, a Partnership with God

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July 26, 2016



Myrna and Michael Lapres with their sons: Daniel, David, Matthew, and daughter-in-law, Sarah.

Through the many different hats that I have had the privilege of wearing - parent, teacher, youth minister, Sunday School teacher, assistant pastor & educator - it has become increasingly clear to me that the family is under enormous pressure today and parents are struggling with the skills necessary to provide the family life they desire.

My husband and I had the opportunity to participate in several amazing parent groups over the years that gave us support and skills in raising our three sons.

Through our experiences, trials and errors, successes and failures, there are several things that have emerged for me as golden truths about parenting.

First of all, the family has been around since the beginning of time and is essential to the health and well-being of our communities and the world. I believe that this is part of God's design.

UTS co-founder, Sun Myung Moon has said:

“The family is the only institution created by God. It is the school of love where people can learn how to love each other and live together in peace, and it is the training center where we practice how to build a palace of peace in the world.”

As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen p.212

To me, this means that the family is the place to learn to love and be loved with relationship at the heart of it all.

Secondly, kids' greatest sense of security comes when they are confident that their parents love each other. That means that even as a couple becomes a family and gets involved with the raising of their children, they still need to find time to invest in their own relationship. When children see their parents love each other in a respectful, trustful and positive manner, they have a much better chance of having the same kind of relationship with their future spouse.

Both of these golden truths involve parents modeling the kind of relationships, behavior and heart that they want their children to inherit. For many of us, we did not have these kind of role models in our own upbringing and this presents us with the challenge of fulfilling a role as parents that we often feel unprepared for. I truly believe that part of my calling in life is to help families get more tools in their toolbox, to help parents learn how to raise respectful, responsible, and fun-to-be-with kids, while still setting boundaries and forming healthy lifetime relationships.

I was introduced to the Love and Logic approach to parenting which is built around the science of crafting caring and respectful relationships. For more than 40 years, Jim Fey and Dr. Charles Fey (father and son) have been supporting parents to build relationships with their children that start from love and empathy and grow through the logical consequences of the choices the children have made. Some of the guiding principles of Love and Logic include:

- shared control
- shared thinking and decision-making
- apply empathy before delivering the consequences
- provide opportunity for building self-concept
- chores are contributions to the family
- responsibility builds self-esteem
- relationship is at the heart of it all

Over the past year, I have had several conversations with Crescentia DeGoede, National Director of the Blessing and Family Ministry of FFWPU-USA, about the need to provide more support for parents. From this, the webinar series, "Parenting, A Partnership With God" was born. For the series, I am drawing on my years of experience, a number of different parenting programs including Love and Logic which I feel aligns so well with principles from the Bible and Divine Principle as well as the expertise of others in the field.

The first two webinars "Mission Possible: Raising Responsible & Respectful and Fun-to-be-With Kids" and "The Joy of the Early Years: Birth to Five" were recorded and are available in the Parenting: A Partnership with God * Webinar Series. The next webinar is on Thursday, August 11, 6 pm PST/9 pm EST, please register at Parenting Webinar. I will be presenting on "Tools for Raising Children & Teens with Responsible Decision Making Skills" and why the goal of obedience and compliance is an inferior goal. In closing, I'd like to leave you with one of my favorite parenting quotes attributed to the columnist Ann Landers,

"It is not what you do for your children but what you have taught them to do for themselves that will make them successful human beings."

A pioneering new film "The Beginning of Life" has been released across global streaming and multimedia platforms. It is a groundbreaking feature documentary that explores the impact of a child's early environment on their cognitive, social and emotional development. It was released worldwide on Netflix, iTunes and Google Play on June 1, 2016. I think you will enjoy it. - Here is the trailer: The Beginning of Life youtu.be/LHqUMqvL1RQ