

Hindrances to Spiritual Parenting

PART ONE

Many Christians are not living according to the manufacturer's instructions

The church today is filled with people who want to be spiritual parents, but hurts from the past, sin, insecurities or dysfunctional role models stunt them spiritually, preventing them from reaching out to others.

Some of the schemes from the enemy that can hinder us from experiencing the blessing of healthy spiritual family relationships:

Not believing the past can be redeemed and restored

- **Romans 8:28** *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*
- **Galatians 3:13** says **Jesus is a great redeemer.** We must trust the Lord to take what went wrong in our lives and turn it around. Jesus' genealogy includes Rahab. Her salvation is evidence that God redeems future generations.

Not passing on what God has given us because others have not passed on to us what they have received

- There are many dysfunctional spiritual parents in the body of Christ.
- Dysfunctional parents use their children to fulfill their own vision instead of releasing their children to do what God has called them to do.

NOTES

Feeling we must wait until our needs are met

- By sowing into others' lives, we are promised to reap a return.
- **Ecclesiastes 11:1** *Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again.*

Ignorance

- Many have never heard of spiritual parenting or do not understand it.
- Ignorance is a curse because it robs us of our inheritance!

Apathy

- When people are wrapped up in their own selfish desires, they become apathetic to the things of God.
- Revelation 3:19 *I continually discipline and punish everyone I love; so I must punish you, unless you turn from your indifference and become enthusiastic about the things of God (TLB).*

Insecurity

- "I do not know how to be a spiritual parent. I'm afraid. I don't know the Bible well enough. I need to get my life more together."
- Insecurities paralyze us; we never move beyond our comfort zone.

A lack of modeling

Perhaps we never had a parent to guide us—natural or spiritual, so we wait on the sidelines because we have no idea how to parent.

Impatience

- Impatience will cause us to quit when we don't see quick results. This is contrary to the scriptural principle of sowing and reaping.
- "God is not working toward a particular finish—His purpose is the process itself"—Oswald Chambers
- **Three stages to every vision:** The honeymoon stage, the testing stage, the fruitfulness stage.

Fear of our mistakes

- After wrestling with the Lord, Jacob walked with a limp.
- Hardships and mistakes make us stronger if we learn from them.

Hurts from the past

- Taking initiative requires taking risks.
- Spiritual sons and daughters will not always like what we have to say.
- Look beyond the superficial symptoms and be willing to take the risk to challenge your spiritual son or daughter to face the problems he or she is experiencing.

Abuse of authority

Spiritual fathers and mothers cannot be dominating authority figures that coerce their children into submission. They must be servants who point their spiritual children to Jesus. A level of trust must be built.

Dominating Fathers ¹

1. Function as if they are the source of guidance for people's lives.
2. Emphasize the rights of leaders.
3. Set leaders apart and give them special privileges.
4. Seek to control people's actions.
5. Emphasize the importance of the leaders ministering to others.
6. Use rules and laws to control people and force them to conform to a mold.

Fathers in the Lord ¹

1. Believe that God is the source of guidance and desire to help other Christians learn to hear His voice.
2. Emphasize the responsibilities of leaders.
3. Emphasize the body of Christ serving one another.
4. Encourage people to be dependent on God.
5. Emphasize the importance of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry.
6. Provide an atmosphere of trust and grace to encourage growth.

NOTES

“Burned stones” in the body of Christ

- **Nehemiah 4:2** ...*What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall?...Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?*
- The enemies of God’s people ridiculed Nehemiah for trying to rebuild the broken wall around Jerusalem.
- **I Peter 2:5** *You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*
- When we come to Christ, we are stones that have come alive spiritually. We once were dead but now we are living stones being built together into a living house of relationships.

Sometimes Christians get “burned” or discouraged

- The devil is throwing accusations at God’s people today:
“How do you think you can function with all the baggage you carry around from that broken relationship?” or “You’ve made too many mistakes, how do you expect to help someone else?”
- **God wants to place discouraged fathers and mothers back on His wall of service.**

Believe God, not the lies of the enemy

- We will feel unable to fulfill the Lord’s call on our lives if we believe the lies of the enemy.
- The burned stones were charred and looked useless, but God’s people chose not to look at the dismal circumstances.

Some of God’s people feel “dropped”

- Mephibosheth believed a lie (II Samuel 9).
- So many people, with a clear call of God on their lives, feel they have been burned emotionally or “dropped” by someone they trusted. They often live in deep disappointment and fear that the Lord will never use them again.

What if you were “burned or dropped”?

- **God is a restorer.** Regardless of what you have been through, God wants to restore you.
- **II Timothy 4:7** *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.* Near the end of his life, Paul was in prison and most of his co-workers had left him. Even so, Paul shows no regrets. He knew that however dismal the circumstances looked, He could trust God.

PART ONE Questions

1. What positive impact has spiritual parenting had on your life?
2. What are some areas of discouragement you have experienced in the area of spiritual parenting?

PART TWO

What should we do if we have been falsely accused or hurt by others? Sometimes we must choose to drink the cup

- **Numbers 5:11-20** We should not try to vindicate ourselves when others accuse us falsely.
- **Mercy triumphs over judgment—James 2:13b**
...Mercy triumphs over judgment! We must extend mercy to each other and leave the judgment to God. Do not judge, and you will not be judged (Luke 6:37).

NOTES

Take steps to be restored!

- **Galatians 3:13a; I John 3:8b** *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us...The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.*
- We are free from the devil's lies over our lives because we are free from the curse. We can reclaim what Satan stole from us.

1. Faith unlocks the door

- Confess the truth of God's Word (Romans 10:17), and faith is built.
- Spiritual fathers and mothers impart spiritual truth to their sons and daughters by God's Word.

2. Stake your claim

- **Joshua 1:2-3** God promised the children of Israel the fertile land of Canaan. It was legally their land because God promised it to them.
- They had to receive it by going in, taking it from their enemies, and staking the claim for themselves.

3. Receive prayer from a trusted friend

- **James 5:16** *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*
- Seek the counsel of a godly friend so he or she can assist you on how to obtain God's forgiveness, receive healing in your emotions, and gain the strength to sin no more.

4. Be patient

- The process may not happen overnight.
- **Hebrews 6:12b** *...imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.*

5. Keep your branches growing over the wall

- **Genesis 49:22** Joseph, a man of moral and spiritual strength, was likened to a young fruit tree with its branches going over the well wall.
- Your branches will grow abundantly over the wall too if you are constantly watered by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.

You will be stronger!

- God is calling forth His people who have been burned and broken; He is healing them and giving them a job to do.
- God loves to use burned stones!

Remember, you can't give what you don't have (the example of John)

- Spiritual fathers and mothers must be secure in the Father's love.
- The example of John: John was assured of Jesus' love.
- **John 15:9a** *As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.*

Spiritual fathers and mothers will be secure whether or not other people affirm them

Your significance comes from His love for you, and from His love for you alone.

Spiritual fathers and mothers are secure and forgiven (the example of Mark)

- A combination of a growing intimacy with the Father, a praying mother, and the nurturing aspect of spiritual fathers in Mark's life caused him to grow up spiritually and become secure and useful in the Lord's service.
- **Acts 12:12** His mother's home was used for prayer.
- **I Peter 5:13** Peter calls Mark his "son."

NOTES

Strive for a healed relationship with your natural father

- Family counselors' offices are filled with people struggling with what happened in their relationships with their parents.
- Spiritual fathers and mothers should attempt to mend a broken relationship with their natural parents.

Spiritual fathers and mothers must be secure to give love away

We are not spiritual fathers and mothers for what it does for us, we are spiritual fathers and mothers out of obedience to the Lord. He loves us perfectly.

Ask yourself these three questions:

1. Are you a burned stone?
2. Have you felt dropped?
3. Do you know you are really, really loved by your heavenly Father?

Luke 15:20 The prodigal son: when you take a step toward your heavenly Father, He runs toward you!

PART TWO Questions

1. What do you sense the Holy Spirit is saying to you right now that would hinder you from becoming a spiritual parent?
2. Could we pray with you about what the Lord is showing you?

¹ Floyd McClung, *The Father Heart of God*, (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1985), pp. 129-131.