



My Thoughts as a Parent

As a CCS teacher, I look forward each week to reading this insert in the Warrior Weekly. I am interested in what other teachers have to say regarding their educational experiences in hopes that I might learn something that will help me be better at my job. But truth be told, I also read these inserts wondering what I would write if I had the opportunity.

Well, my opportunity is here! And as I begin this task, I realize that I am not certain what to write about. I want to write something interesting and insightful, useful to all who read it. I have visions of an article so good that people will want to save it and read it over and over again. However, I do not feel well-versed enough in teaching theory or theology to say definitively something that will have such a stupendous result.

So, I think I will write about something I can speak to from my experience—being a parent of two CCS students. For those of you who do not know, I have two children here. Austin is in 7th grade, and Abby is in 5th grade. This is our fifth year here, and both of my kids have had only Christian-based education since pre-school. I am sincere when I say we have been blessed in so many ways despite the circumstances which brought us here and may seem to some to be more tragedy than blessing. The means by which God led us here is

truly a great story of His loving work in our lives, despite the loss of my wife to cancer eight years ago. But, I will save that story for another time.

One of the benefits of being a teacher here is that I get to participate closely in my children's daily lives. What a great gift that has been! We are all with our kids outside of school, but not many have such close contact as I do during the eight hours Austin and Abby are at school. I get to know the teachers, their friends, their classmates, and many of the families at CCS. These folks have so much time with my kids that I feel fortunate to be so close to some potentially prominent influences in my children's lives.

In addition, my benefit comes from talking to others about their approach to child rearing. As a teacher, I hear about how others deal with their kids. I see the results of different methods—some good and some not so good. As a parent, I am constantly challenged to wonder if my approach with my children is the right one, and I look for ideas about how I might do a better job with my children. Yet, I know that my children are going to develop according to God's plan for their lives, not mine. That is a great comfort, but it does not let me off the hook—God clearly wants us as parents to accept responsibility for our children's upbringing.

So, I thought I would share a few thoughts on being a parent of students who I want to grow in Christ through our educational approach at CCS. As a teacher, I often talk to parents about what I believe may help them deal with their children, but my thoughts are often from a parent perspective. I know that some of what works for one person may not work as well for others. Still, I know there are some truths that I can be certain about—not because I thought them up, but because they are from God's word. These words are for all of us non-perfect parents (i.e., all parents):

Ultimately, nothing in life really matters except our relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. If we are following Christ and seeking His path to righteousness, an amazing thing happens. God blesses us with lives that are complete with all that we need. (Matt 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.) Then, we are assured that God will do mighty works in our lives and those of our children no matter what approach we take because He will be the one making things happen, not us. I relentlessly rest in this promise as I see God graciously bringing up my children as He sees fit despite my inadequate parenting.

As long as our children live with us, they are our charges, and we are their



bosses. We have the authority—and the responsibility—to get them to do what they need to as they mature into adults. (Deut 32:46 [Moses] said to them, “Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law.”) Their lives as students reflect our parenting. I don’t mean the grades they make—I mean how they carry themselves, how hard they work, how they interact and impact others, and how they respond to success and failure.

We must use our position over our children to discipline them to be disciplined. It seems that I am using two different meanings of that word—one associated with punishment while the other has to do with diligence. However, the first use is more about training them to do what they may not want to do for their ultimate good, which may require punishment. (Proverbs 22:6 Train a child in the

way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.) Christian parents should train their charges to be Christ-like. Disciplining does not always need to be punishment to be effective, but training is necessary in order for Christian children to learn accountability before the Lord for their lives. They need a disciplined approach to life if they are going to contribute to God’s kingdom rather than be a drain on it. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

As parents and guardians, we can always do more. For me, this is often hard to admit because I get worn out and may feel I deserve a break. Proper parenting is demanding, and it is made tougher when we encounter new territory as a parent. But, if I am honest with myself, my problem is not “How do I keep going when I am tired?” or “How do I make the right decision when confronted with an issue?” The challenge is “What do I do for my kids when I am not tired?”

and “What have I done proactively to prepare them for the inevitable tests they will face?” Not only do I need to teach my children diligence, but I need to be diligent in my parenting! (John 9:4 As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.)

I hope these thoughts are helpful—not because I am so wise in this parent role I have. Instead, I pray they encourage you to be diligent in your job as a parent or guardian. As a teacher, I am also a part-time parent to your children, but I cannot take your place. I appreciate the opportunity to partner with you as we seek to rear our children to the glory of God and His kingdom. May He bless us all as we struggle with the task at hand. Let us be thankful that ultimately He is in control of what our children learn as they grow!

~ *David Jennings*

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