

5 MISTAKES TO AVOID IN PARENTING

ESSENTIAL PARENTING
STRATEGIES FOR
POSITIVE CHANGE

A FREE PDF GUIDE



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Raising kids is one of the most rewarding things you will ever do, and one of the hardest.

Every parent wants to give their kids the best. We want to make good choices for them, protect them, and set them up to succeed in life. That is true whether you grew up going to church or have never set foot in one.

But here is a question: who gets to decide what “best” means?

It is easy to let that answer come from somewhere outside of us. Like, following what’s trending on social media, copying what other parents are doing, or what an influencer says is the latest parenting hack. None of that is automatically bad. But if we let these outside influences define core values and set the agenda for how we raise our kids, we end up building our approach to parenting on a flimsy foundation.

There is a better approach. Instead of letting culture, comparison, or those around you make the call, you can build your parenting on something solid: what God has said about family, parenting, kids, and love. All of this must be centered on Jesus. This does not mean parents will have it all figured out in every decision and situation. However, it does mean raising our children in a tough world while we direct them in the ways of the Lord, our sure foundation.

It can be so easy for us to drift without noticing. We start out wanting to raise good kids with good values, then slowly other voices can emerge and start to define “good” instead of learning how God defines good for us.

Below are five common mistakes parents can make when something other than Jesus sets the direction for their home. This is not here to make anyone feel like they are failing. These are here to help you notice where the drift is happening, so you can do something about it. Oh, and if you don’t have a church you call home, McGregor is here to help you point your family to Jesus!

MISTAKE #1

1. Not focusing on our own heart and personal growth in Christ — 2 Peter 3:18

- Ask yourself, Do I personally know Christ as my Savior and Lord? Am I faithful in walking with the Lord and His Word daily? Do I prioritize church attendance and involvement? Do my attitudes and responses at home demonstrate Christlikeness, a love for the Savior, love for others, and growth in Christ? Am I personally encouraged by God's goodness, faithfulness, and grace on a daily basis?
- Remember, you cannot give away what you do not have. The best gift you could give your precious children is your own personal Christlikeness and love for Him.

MISTAKE #2

2. Finding identity in talents, goals, looks, or accomplishments instead of in Jesus Christ — Galatians 2:20

- As Christian parents our main goals for our children are not academic or athletic. Rather, it's for them to know that it's their identity in Christ that will last for all eternity. Personal security will never come from a personal accomplishment or earthly success, but from a personal relationship with the Savior who died and rose again in our place.
- While academic and athletic accomplishments are nice, they cannot change who we are at the heart-level. Our looks change. Trophies often collect dust in a closet. But the Christian's greatest accomplishment is found in what Jesus accomplished for us at the cross. Nothing will give a child more security and satisfaction than knowing that God is for them in Christ. That they are loved in Christ. That they are secure in Christ. Unlike our age, social standing, physical abilities, or appearance, who we are in Christ will always be our greatest source of identity and security.

MISTAKE #3

3. Comparing our children to others — 2 Corinthians 10:12

- Your child is a precious creation. Created in the image of God and knitted together in their mother's womb by God Himself. Your child is also a precious gift from God. One of the most harmful things we can do to a child is compare their giftedness or appearance to other children.

- God's goal for your child is not for them to compete or compare with other children. Be grateful for the way God created your child. He makes no mistakes and like you, they are not a finished product. They're still growing and changing into the image of Christ. Which is a lifelong process.

MISTAKE #4

4. Making our own expectations the standard instead of Christlikeness — Philippians 3:10

- In our age of social media images it's tempting to make our culture's expectations our expectations for our children. But God's expectations never change — to glorify Him by becoming more like Christ.
- Two questions to ask when setting standards for our children that may not agree with our own personal standards:
 - › Does this bring glory to God?
 - › Is this a clear sin issue?
- God must always be the one we're aiming to please. If that's truly the aim, then our ultimate target will be to become more like the Savior and less like us.

MISTAKE #5

5. Not constantly reminding your children of the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ — 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

- **Newsflash!** Our children will fall short. They will disappoint themselves, their parents, their friends, and even God. So we must constantly remind them that through Jesus Christ and His death and resurrection God readily offers to them grace, forgiveness, peace, assurance, a clean slate, acceptance, and security. Remind them of God's demonstration of love at the cross.
- Christians must be people who give constant hope because the gospel is the most hopeful message in the universe. There is no secular science or theory that can give hope like the Lord Jesus Christ. When we come to God on His terms He will then give us His grace. What a great God!
- Let's be so careful to not have an unbiblical or ungodly response to our child's sin by provoking them to anger (see Ephesians 6). Instead of giving them anger, model the gospel of grace and hope well for them.

Parents, let this be an encouragement on avoiding these common mistakes. By starting to study where your heart is before God, you can then understand the reality of sin in your life and in this world. Even in this fallen world, parents can resist the outside influences that distract and distort what God has said in His Word (the Bible). Families are a gift from God, and children are our heritage. Intentionally engage your child's heart, and strive to model how God transforms our heart and mind, even as we live in an upside-down world (Romans 12:1-2). This is how discipleship starts in the home.

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.
Proverbs 3:5-6 ESV*