



FIVE PARENTING FOUNDATIONS

By Walt Mueller, CPYU President

Parenting in today's world is not an easy task. Here are five elements that are essential foundations to parenting as you travel through the few short years you have with your children.

Your approach to parenting should be biblical.

From the moment they are born, our children need parents who tune themselves in to the most reliable source of parenting information and instruction. God has given us the Bible to guide us through these difficult and confusing days. Your approach to parenting should be informed and guided by God's Word. Study the Bible with diligence on a regular basis. Prayerfully ask God to use your times in His Word to reveal Himself and His will. Discover how the Bible speaks to the molders and shapers of contemporary youth culture. Uncover the character traits and attitudes that God calls us to exhibit in our families and other relationships.

Your approach to parenting should be realistic.

Why is it that so many of us feel like failures when we or our children make a mistake? My guess is that we are disappointed because we expect ourselves and our children to be perfect—a very unrealistic expectation. The reality is that because of our sinful natures, we are broken people raising broken people. But our gnawing sense of imperfection should not keep us from endeavoring to be good parents. Realistic parents pave the way for family closeness and help their children find their identity in Christ by parenting with grace. They aren't paralyzed by feelings of fear, shame, and inadequacy when they or their children make mistakes.

Your approach to parenting should be preventive.

We all share a concern for our children's physical well-being. We tell our kids to stay out of the street, to look both ways, don't take candy from strangers, and to keep

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away from hot stuff. Parents who expect to lead their kids through adolescence into spiritual health should also take preventive measures. Our children should be equipped to face life and all of its challenges. They need us to pass on the valuable information we have learned about life. We need to speak openly about the dangers and results of choosing to walk through life in opposition to God's will and way.

Your approach to parenting should be redemptive.

How will you respond to your children when they make a mistake or do something wrong? All teens will make sinful choices, and the determining factor in whether or not a sinful choice turns into a situation that gets better or worse will depend on your response. Let me suggest that your goal should be to redeem these situations by turning a mistake into an opportunity for your teen to learn about what it means to have a heart for God. Treat your child as you think Jesus would treat you if you were the offending party.

Your approach to parenting should be prayerful.

Parents, we need to pray for answers — answers to the questions that we have about raising our children and answers to our children's questions about who they are and what they should believe. You see, our children grow in the wisdom and nurture of the Lord in spite of us, not because of us. Sure, they learn a lot from the example we live and the words we choose, but the fact of the matter is that it is ultimately God who gives faith to our kids and leads them to spiritual health.



The Center for Parent/Youth Understanding is a nonprofit organization committed to building strong families by serving to bridge the cultural-generational gap between parents and teenagers.

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