



Season of Parenting

May 25, 2019

Texts: Genesis 18:11; Jeremiah 31:25; Matthew 11:28; Psalm 127; Proverbs 22:6; 1 Samuel 3:10-14; Philippians 3:13

If Ellen White wrote the counsels that comprise the book *Child Guidance* in 2019, how would she modify her guidelines on parenting for the 21st century?

Counselor Michael Reffner shares some insights into parenting in the 21st century: “The birth of new technologies in the 20th century was supposed to make our lives easier and provide more time for family, personal interests, or just to relax. Instead, the pace has picked up. Work demands have become more hectic. Our schedules are overloaded. But our children—not much has changed!”

Even though 21st century children are highly tech-savvy, they are still essentially kids with kids’ needs. What often needs to change is our modern approach to parenting.

Reffner offers 21 tips for parenting in the 21st century. These tips include such simple advice as “Tell your children you love them, eat dinner as a family,” and even, “get to know your child.” In many families, it’s the parents who need to put down their phones and return to these basic concepts. When it comes to effective parenting, it seems that the more things change, the more they stay the same. [1]

Our lesson discussion this week includes non-traditional parenting situations that have increased to levels that even Ellen White may not have envisioned. Step-parenting, single parenting, and adoption were present in Ellen White’s day, but those cases were the exception. What remains the same in our very complex society is the basic needs of children. Children must learn to trust in a safe, secure environment. They need to know that they are loved unconditionally and that they can return that unconditional love. They crave opportunities to learn socialization in a fun atmosphere where job #1 is to play

freely!

Scripture includes several examples of non-traditional families. Moses and Esther were both adopted. Tamar raised Perez and Zerah as a single mom after being impregnated by her father-in-law Judah. Paul, with no biological children of his own, treated Timothy as a son (1 Timothy 1:2). Jesus grew up in a blended family with step-siblings. In today's complicated myriad of family configurations—including same-sex and transsexual parenting—the Bible is surprisingly relevant.

No matter what situation parents find themselves in, Deuteronomy 6 provides some basic principles for child raising. As Tuesday's lesson points out, there are four prerequisites for raising spiritually mature children: we parents must recognize God as the Lord of our own lives, we must love God supremely in our hearts, we must value God's Word, and then we can share our own knowledge and experience of God with our children. As parents become the conduit to connect their children with God, that deeply personal connection opens the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of children to their parents. That personal openness and vulnerability can overcome a multitude of parenting blunders.

~Chuck Burkeen

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[1] <https://thriveworks.com/blog/21-parenting-tips/>

For Reflection

Connecting: Sketch the most fun activity that you remember your parents doing with you as a child. Display your sketches by sticking them to a wall or laying them out on a table. As you admire each other's drawings, be prepared to answer questions to explain the activity. What impact did this have on you?

Sharing: As you reflect on the story of the Prodigal Son, what do you honestly think would be your natural response (not necessarily the proper response) if you were the parent in this story?

1. I would respond exactly like the father in the story
2. I would chase my wayward kid to the ends of the earth to try to drag him or her home
3. The Prodigal Son made his bed, and now he can lie in it—he wanted me to die, and is therefore no longer my child
4. There is always a place in my home for a wayward child who returns, but I'm not going to beat myself up as a bad parent because of his or her dumb choices
5. I actually like the obedient older brother better, so he will get my greatest affection from now on
6. Other:

Applying: Briefly discuss some of the most appalling parenting situations that you are aware of. In each of these cases, suggest strategies that you believe would help the children overcome their unfortunate circumstances. Are there any common elements you see in your remedies?

Valuing: Personally consider your own character traits, especially aspects that you would like to improve on. Were any of these a result of what you can identify as parenting failures in your family? First, ask God to forgive your parents for their shortcomings. Then, ask God, as your heavenly Parent, for a redo in this area of your life.

Welcome to Sharing Scripture

We hope you have been enjoying Sharing Scripture as an interactive weekly resource for your Adult Sabbath School study guides. Not only does this resource start with a story in the news and link it with the Bible texts and topic of the Adult Sabbath School study guide, but it provides questions for reflection. The four questions follow this cycle of learning:

Connecting: a question or two that moves you from personal experience into the Bible

Sharing: digging deeper into Scripture and understanding what it means

Applying: experimenting in fun and interactive ways, making the Biblical concepts work for you

Valuing: a call to action in your life as God is prompting you to respond

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