

# Seeking the Way of Grace, Parenting as Christ's Ambassadors

September 30, 2021

## Street-Level Directions or the Big Picture?

When we feel lost in the mundane tasks of parenting, we can tend to want a tidy list of “how-to” instructions to help us navigate specific challenges with our kids. But what we really need is to get reoriented within God’s big gospel view of parenting, the “aerial view” of what He calls us to do as parents.



**Ambassador:** an authorized messenger or representative; a diplomatic official of the highest rank sent by a government to represent it (or its sovereign) on a temporary mission

“Parenting is not first about what we want for our children or from our children, but about what God in grace has planned to do through us in our children.” –Paul Tripp, p. 14-15.

From Paul Tripp’s *Parenting: The 14 Gospel Principles that Can Radically Change Your Family*

	<b>Parenting as Owner</b>	<b>Parenting as Ambassador</b>
<b>Identity</b>	Parents seek identity, self-worth, and purpose from their children. They tend to take their kids’ failures personally and respond with hurt and anger.	Parents know their identity comes from the One whom they represent: Jesus. They are freed from expecting their children to give them life, and they can move past their own needs to parent selflessly.
<b>Work</b>	Parents believe it’s their job to transform their child into “something” (good person, superstar, etc.).	Parents understand that they have no power to change their children and, without God’s wisdom, wouldn’t even know what is best for their children.
<b>Success</b>	Parents gauge their success by indicators in their children’s lives, such as academic performance, musical ability, and social strengths.	Parents recognize that parenting isn’t about trying to achieve goals. Instead, successful parenting is about being a usable and faithful tool in the hands of God, who is the only one who can produce good things in your children.
<b>Reputation</b>	Parents are preoccupied with how their children make them look and essentially turn them into their trophies.	Parents understand that parenting sinners will expose the messiness of family life, and they accept the complexity of the job God has called them to do. They accept that public misunderstanding and embarrassment will happen.

<sup>14</sup>For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. <sup>15</sup>And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

<sup>16</sup>So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. <sup>17</sup>Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! <sup>18</sup>All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: <sup>19</sup>that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup>We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

--II Corinthians 5:14-21

*Reconciliation: the work of God in changing a relationship from breakdown and fragmentation to harmony and fellowship*

- What can we learn here about our role as Christ's ambassadors? Consider the motivation or energy behind this role, as well as the ministry and message.
  
- What difference could the ministry and message of reconciliation make in the lives of our children?

### Application

- 1) Can you think of a recent parenting moment when God enabled you to glimpse the deeper spiritual significance of your seemingly ordinary, even mundane situation?
- 2) In what ways do you recognize a tendency toward ownership in your parenting?
- 3) How can the reality of who God is and who you are in Christ free you from those ownership tendencies?
- 4) As you feel comfortable, feel free to share any matters for prayer with the women sitting at your table.