STRENGTHENING THE FAMILY
Through Courageous and Loving Parenting
Greg & Sharon Slater
A mother is the noblest of all professions and callings ...

Sharon with Julie, Amelia & Jessica
A father provides for, presides over, protects and nurtures his family...

Greg with Tyler, Luis, Afonso and Michael
How you view children affects your parenting style

• **Are children**
  – Innately evil?
  – Innately good?
  – A blank slate?
  – Molded by biological factors?
  – Able to interpret and mold their own environment?

• **There is some truth to all of the above**
  – Human beings have a dual nature
  – Parents must nourish the divine within children
Three Major Parenting Styles

What style do you use?

• Authoritarian Parents
  – Controlling with little warmth
  – Do not allow children to participate in setting rules or expectations for them

• Permissive Parents
  – Show warmth and love toward their children
  – But offer little guidance or correction

• Authoritative Parents
  – Have same high expectations as authoritarians
  – But they are loving, supportive, inclusive
Measuring Success
*Not by the results, but by the parental effort made*

• Successful parents are those who have sacrificed and struggled to do the best they can.

• We should not judge good, faithful parents because some of their children rebel.

• “If you have never had any problems with your children, just wait a while.”

• Understanding your children and spending time with each of them is key to good parenting.

“When there are challenges, you fail only if you quit trying.”
Principles for successful parenting (based on findings from studies)

- **Love & Compassion** – *The most important*

- **Faith** – *Studies show faith based, religious homes are stronger*

- **Prayer** – *Individually and as a family*

- **Repentance & Forgiveness** – *Parents should exemplify these traits so children learn how to overcome their mistakes*

- **Respect** – *Foundation for real love; avoid criticism/control*

- **Work** – *According to the age and capability of the child*

- **Wholesome recreation** – *Strengthens families*

  **Which one(s) do you need to work on?**
A family that plays together stays together
Communicating with Love

Good communication skills strengthen family relationships

• We communicate verbally and non-verbally
  – Our expressions, voice tones, movements, thoughts betray us
  – It is impossible not to communicate

• Parents can break destructive communication by changing the way they listen & respond
  – Angry/frustrated parents and children communicate in destructive ways
  – Respectful communication gets better results

Changing one’s attitude toward self, others and life may be needed before good communication is possible
The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

“If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man”
(James 3:2)

How will you and I communicate differently tomorrow?

- **Harmful**
  - Lecturing, interrogating
  - Judging, threatening
  - Blaming, criticizing
  - Ridiculing
  - Talking about self when a child needs to share

- **Good**
  - Slow to condemn, forgiving
  - Compassionate, considerate
  - Willing to return good for evil
  - Appreciative
  - Eager to serve
  - Willing to sacrifice and place interests of others above self

“Those thing which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart” (Mathew 15:8)
Good Communication

*Increasing the quality and frequency of our interactions*

- **Return good for evil**
  - Ignore obnoxious behavior when harmless
  - Do not be defensive when criticized
  - Act like an adult, not like a child

- **Really listen to your children**
  - Helps them feel valued and respected
    (emotional first aid)
  - Principles for effective listening:
    - *Ask questions that invite the child to talk*
    - *Identify and name the child’s feelings*
    - *Paraphrase back what the child says*
Time = Love

- Weekly family time
- Regular dinner with entire family
- Individual time with each child
Improving Communication

Children treated with respect often will respect parents

• **Obstacles to communication**
  - Parent afraid to confront child
  - Believes he or she is always right
  - Wants to control their children
  - Wants to solve all their children’s problems
  - Parent is uninvolved, permissive, doesn’t care

• **Share feelings appropriately when upset**
  - Words of anger often are “you” (condemning) statements
  - Instead use “I” statements to indicate how a child’s behavior affects you (reduces defensiveness)
How to use “I” Statements

examples

**Good**

- “I” feel ... when ...
  - I feel frustrated when no one cleans the kitchen after I made a nice meal
  - I feel upset when assigned work in the house is not done right
  - I am disappointed because that was my favorite vase

**Bad**

- “You” are so so ...
  - You are so lazy
  - Can’t you do anything right?
  - Now look at what you’ve broken. You’re so clumsy
Helping Children Resolve Problems

- Ask questions to identify the cause
- **Brainstorm with (not for) the child**
  - No solution too silly to discuss
- **Evaluate possible solutions**
  - Fair? Will it work? Affect others? Help or hurt someone?
  - How will the child feel? Are all respected?
- **Help the child decide which solution is best**
  - If a child is determined to try a solution that parents believe will fail, they may want to allow it if not harmful

Parents need to teach children correct principles so they can learn to govern themselves responsibly
Fostering Confidence

• **Confident children do better in life**
  - More optimistic, happier, emotionally secure, healthier

• **Parents need to help children gain confidence in areas important to their well being**
  - Show unconditional love and support
  - Give sincere compliments for successes
  - Never say anything negative about them
  - Set a good example of confidence
  - Help them to develop faith
  - Encourage them to learn from mistakes
  - Help them to become competent in something
  - Teach them to serve others
The Problem with Anger

A temper destroys affection

- All parents get angry at times
  - Anger can serve a purpose if controlled
  - But anger is seductive and addictive

- Managing anger the wrong way
  - Aggression
  - Internalization
  - Passive/aggressive behavior

- Costs of anger are many
  - Loss of respect, self-confidence, guilt
  - Rebellion, damage to self and others
  - Children fear parents
Understanding Anger

• **Causes of anger**
  – Frustration that escalates
  – Pride or selfishness, not getting your way
  – Being mistreated
  – Distorted perceptions

• **Identify your anger cycle**
  – Pretend to be normal phase
  – Build up phase
  – Acting out phase
  – Downward spiral phase

Parents need to control and overcome their own anger before helping their children do the same
Principles for Overcoming Anger

- Take responsibility for your emotions
- Pray for strength
- Get out of the situation
- Identify calming activities
- Share underlying feelings
- Seek spiritual change
- Prevent relapse (break anger cycle)
Teaching Children Responsible Behavior

How are we doing?

• Begin teaching children when they are infants

• Teach by example
  – Hypocrisy is very damaging
  – They remember our example more than what we say or do

• Give children responsibilities
  – Do not over-indulge or shield them from hard work
  – Children need to learn to deny themselves
  – Instant gratification makes for weak people
  – We should work alongside them, with age appropriate chores

“Working side-by-side in the right spirit creates a foundation of caring and commitment”
Teaching Children Responsible Behavior
A critical part of parenting

- **Clarify expectations**
  - Make sure you know what you want and it is reasonable
  - Choose a good time to discuss your request
  - Be positive and specific
  - Show what you mean
  - Give lots of positive feedback (use “I” statements)

- **Teach responsibility one step at a time**
  - Achievable, age appropriate tasks

- **Give effective choices**
  - Both need to be acceptable to you

Work and play can both be used to foster good relationships with our children
Afonso’s Blessing Chart
(You get 1 Point for each task)
50 pts = 2 hours of TV watching! 100 pts = Movie with a friend!

- Brush teeth
- Sweep kitchen floor
- Clean my bedroom
- Help make dinner
- Pray daily to Heavenly Father
- Read scriptures
- Take out garbage
- Brush teeth
- Take a shower
- Do homework
- Put on lotion
- Do secret service for someone in the family
Feedback from the Slater Children

• **Right**
  - Taught us to work
  - Established consequences ahead of time
  - Spent money on what really mattered

• **Wrong**
  - Sometimes too emotional when disciplining
  - Some expectations too high without giving me the needed confidence
  - You called me lazy once
Applying Consequences

Essential to progression

- Responsible parents provide guidance, rules and discipline with love and caring
  - Greater focus is given to providing general guidance
  - Specific rules make sense to the children
  - Consequences are logically connected to behavioral issues

- “God forbid that there should be any of us so unwisely indulgent, thoughtless and shallow in our affection that we dare not check our children in a wayward course, in wrong doing or in their foolish love for the things of the world more than for the things of righteousness for fear of offending them”
Applying Consequences
Deciding how and when is critical

• **Recognize appropriate behavior**
  – Children repeat behaviors that draw their parents’ attention
  – “Parents typically ignore 95-97% of the good things children do and are 5-6 times more likely to notice misbehavior”

• **Allow children to experience appropriate natural consequences**
  – Unless physically harmful to them
  – Other consequences may not be necessary

• **Seek agreement on rules and consequences**
  – A child that agrees to a rule and breaks it is less likely to view the consequence as punishment
  – Use good judgment
  – Be consistent with your spouse!
Applying Consequences

Other important factors

• **Apply logical consequences**
  – Make sense to the child
  – Indicate respect for the child
  – Require the child to pay a price

• **Discipline is essential but it must be motivated by love and the welfare of the child**

• **Each child is unique; what works for one may not work for another**
Children should know the purpose of consequences is to help them
Children are Our Future

- **Courageous parenting** is essential. You hold the key to future generations and leaders.

- **To have successful homes**, values must be taught with rules, standards and absolutes.

- **Love and discipline in the home** give children the inner strength needed to deal with life’s challenges.

- **Parents will find no greater joy** than to have their children honor them and their righteous teachings.