

Five Ingredients for Raising Children

by Wayne Goff

I came across an article that suggested five scientific principles needed to raise successful children. Having read the article, I cannot disagree with it. But I thought I would add the biblical aspect to it as well. So here are the five:

Stay On Top Of Them

British researchers discovered that parents who articulate high expectations are more likely to have kids who grow up to be successful, and will avoid some key pitfalls.

The key: children didn't always like hearing all the "high expectations," and they didn't always react civilly to hearing it. But at the end of the day, they heard it.

From a biblical perspective, this is absolutely true in every relationship. We attain success and growth by being challenged, not by being pampered, coddled, and babied. Now biblically speaking, this is what Paul had in mind for children and adults alike who want to succeed. Read Philippians 3:12-14. Paul said he did not think he had already attained his goal, but constantly pressed on, reaching for the things which are ahead.

Praise Them Correctly

Parents tend to praise their children in two ways: (1) for their innate abilities; (2) for their effort. The bottom line is – praise children for their effort, not their innate abilities!

If you praise someone for their innate intelligence, for example, you're praising them for something they had nothing to do with achieving. If you praise someone for their effort, then you are encouraging them to develop exactly as they should to progress. "Great job! You worked hard and figured it out!"

Paul didn't praise the Corinthians when they failed to worship the Lord correctly, 1 Corinthians 11:17, 22. On the other hand, Peter praised his brethren for the "genuineness" of their faith, though it was tested by fire! 1 Peter 1:7. Both had the ability to do the right thing. Praise that which is done correctly and you will instill further progress.

Take Them Outside

Researchers in Europe tracked how much activity was done outside by children every day. The more time spent outside being physically active, the better progress they made in reading and math. We also are told that working in an office, sitting all day, is killing us. But then we tell our children to sit in school for six or seven hours a day! So science encourages physical activity in children, and I might add that it's good for adults too!

Think how much time Jesus and His disciples spent outdoors. Jesus picked fishermen as some of His leaders. He taught on the seashore, in the mountains, and used every day experiences as illustrations. Jesus and the Twelve walked practically everywhere they went, and interacted with people along the way. The entire Gospel record (Matthew-John) tells us to get outside and enjoy God's creation. Read also Acts 14:15-17. God made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and everything in them. He gives us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. Perhaps the artificial bubble we have created for ourselves is not so good after all. Parents, turn off the TV, the electronics, etc. and get your children outside to play!

Read To Them Correctly

Parents of highly successful children read to their children when they were small. And the proper way to read to them is to get them to interact with you. Ask them to read parts of the book. Ask them what they think will happen in the book's plot. Get them mentally engaged.

Include the Bible in their reading schedules. Paul said to his young convert, Timothy, "*and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*" (2 Tim. 3:15). "Childhood" is from the Greek word for "infancy"! You cannot start reading to your children too soon.

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