

## **Please help me before Cain kills Abel**

Developing a parenting plan

**Scripture References:** Genesis 4:1 – 16, 25 – 26

For parenting to be successful you must develop a plan of action. God has given us insight into the issues that every parent faces. In the personality traits of Adam and Eve's children mentioned in the above text we gain insight into effective and successful parenting. In the lives of Cain, Abel, and Seth we can develop an action plan for parenting.

### **CAIN = You parent by MASTERING THE EMOTIONS**

In every child there is a CAIN. Notice from the Scripture reference above the key concerns with Cain's life. He was EMOTIONAL. It was his emotional outburst that robbed him of his greater purpose. His anger got the best of him. God let him know that his emotions were a gateway to evil working in his life. Cain would have to learn how to master his emotions if he was to be successful. Yet, Cain succumbed to the pressure, his emotions won out, and his life was defeated by his emotional status.

### **THE FIRST STEP IN PARENTING IS TO LEARN HOW TO MASTER THE EMOTIONS.**

During the early years, birth to 6 years of age you have to have a plan to help develop your child's emotional makeup. You need to be out in front of your child leading the way. You cannot parent your child's emotions when you've not even learned to control your own emotions. Many times as parents we fight our child's emotional outburst with our own emotional outburst. This is not a successful way to parent. You must learn how to master the emotions for greater success. Here are a few points for mastering the emotions:

- Don't be afraid of your child being emotional (pouting, fits, anger). These are normal reactions to a child learning how to process their feelings.
- Emotions aren't evil. They are God given. Learn how to teach your child about each emotion. Don't fight against their frustrations with your own frustrations.
- Don't let your child's emotions linger on without helping them master the feelings.
- Don't isolate your child (shut them up alone in a room) when they are emotional. Isolation does nothing but make the emotional issue even more emotional. Isolation is the devil's playground in a child's mind. Take time to sit with your child and help them process their feelings.

## **Here are some practical examples of how to MASTER YOUR CHILD'S EMOTIONS:**

1. As a parent, let your YES be YES and your NO be NO.

The best place to start with 'CAIN' is to start at ground zero. Be a parent of keeping your word. Don't use your words to make threats. Use your words to teach. Children find stability in their emotions when they are not trying to figure out what you mean and don't mean - or how far they can push you to change your mind.

God started out with Adam and Eve in a very simple manner. EAT THIS vs. DON'T EAT THAT. This is the beginning phase of the parent child relationship. Ground zero of mastering emotions begins at simple discipline and obedience. When you set the boundaries young and mean what you say children learn to trust your words and the life or consequences associated with their choices.

When you are clear on what you mean it's easier for a child to find clarity when emotional outbursts happen. And trust this, every child will push your parental bounds of what you say.

**Explain why it's such a struggle to just let YES be YES and NO be NO.  
Are you consistent in your discipline? Do you stick to your own plan?**

2. Never discipline a child's emotional outbursts with your own emotional outbursts.

- You screaming louder than your child won't work.
- You pitching a fit yourself doesn't work.
- You using words of anger and frustration won't work.
- You locking them away, out of your hair, won't work.

Consistent discipline is the best form of mastering the emotions. Children learn quickly just how much they can get away with. They learn what methods of emotional outbursts work and which don't. When you are consistent, your own frustration subsides. These early years, 0-6, is more about a child learning the 'ropes' of emotions - they are processing how life works and how you respond. Set good boundaries. Don't fret.

- **Do you discipline more out of emotion or out of a plan?**
- **Do you struggle with your own emotions when disciplining your child?**
- **What could you do to be less emotional when disciplining your child?**

3. When disciplining your child take time to teach. Don't just punish - teach. Notice in Genesis 3 when Adam and Eve blew it, God took time to not only discipline their poor actions but He took the time to remind them of their prophetic purpose. Always use discipline as an opportunity to not just tell your child they were bad, but use it as an opportunity to remind them of the good they are and can be. Don't just use threats when

you discipline. Let your words be teaching words. After discipline, spend time with your child and build their value up and esteem them on their purpose in life. Reassure that your discipline is not a sign of your lack of love and approval of who they are.

- **Are your words teaching or threatening?**
- **Do you take time to teach your child after you discipline them, or do you just discipline them and then thank God it's over?**
- **Do you isolate your child when disciplining them? How can isolation be detrimental?**

## **ABEL = You parent by MODELING YOUR FAITH**

In every child there resides an Abel. Abel was known for his faith. Hebrews 11 speaks of Abel's faith and his giving to the Lord. But rest assured, Cain (emotions) will always attempt to destroy Abel (faith). Again, it's imperative in the young years (0-9) to discipline and train emotions in order for emotions not to derail and destroy faith in the teen years. At around age 10 your child is exploring faith. Whether it's Jesus and Christianity or not, a young adolescent begins to ask the questions that pose a deeper meaning behind every answer you will provide. Who is God? Where did He come from? How does Jesus live in me? How do we know Jesus is God? How is Jesus different than Santa? Believe me, raising a child will solicit some very interesting questions when it comes to faith.

So, to be successful as a parent you must learn to parent your child's faith. The best way to teach a child about God is to model faith yourself as a parent. Technical faith, the rules and creeds of faith, must give way to tangible faith, the reality of Jesus in every day life. The first essence of God a child will know if best know through the parent. You are the first connection to God a child has. As a parent, therefore, MODEL what genuine faith looks like.

How do we get kids to believe in God when they can't see Him? This answer is by modeling the life of faith. Here are some practical ways to model your faith:

1. Walk beside your child guiding and coaching. When modeling faith, don't just bark orders and rules to your child. Let them explore their ideas of faith with you. Help them connect faith to everyday life.

2. Faith must be tangible in your home— it can't just be a Sunday morning church thing. You are the tangible presence of a real Jesus to your child. So what should you model? Read John 1:17 It states, 'grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.' This is the method of modeling faith. You model faith by offering grace and truth. In the young years it's pretty much truth: Do this, don't do that. However, as your child grows you must show them the avenue of grace and truth operating together. A child cannot thrive in an environment of truth with not grace. Kids need more than just truth. At times they need grace. Truth is what they should do. Grace, however, is given when they have failed at truth. If you home

environment is just all truth mixed with discipline, you child will be highly dysfunctional and never measure up to that standard.

- Model truth. Model grace.
- Offer days of grace in lieu of constant discipline to encourage growth and trust.
- Faith MUST be TANGIBLE
  - Faith is first seen in breaking selfish behavior.
  - Teach children to be givers.
  - It's not about Law, it's about Relationship.
- **Is the faith in your home tangible or technical?**
- **Do you offer grace to your child when they fail?**
- **How do you think a child does in an environment of all discipline? How does a teenager do in such an environment? How do you do in such an environment?**
- **What would grace look like to you if offered to your child? Does that scare you?**

### **SETH = You parent by MENTORING THEIR KINGDOM PURPOSE**

In every child there finally resides a SETH. Seth was the byproduct of Adam and Eve's 3rd attempt at 'going into the tent' to be intimate. Seth represents the highest form of parenting. Seth was the lineage from which Jesus would come. Many times you may master the emotions, and model the faith, but if your child never understands they possess a kingdom purpose it can all be a moot effort.

Many parents never reach this level of parenting. Often parents are consumed with living vicariously through their children. Sports, education, and job become the governing factors of upbringing. But there is a higher calling on your child. Every kid has a divine purpose. At around age 15-19 a teen begins to explore their independence from you as a parent. Many parents fear this. However, it is natural and normal. So, rather than fearing their independence guide it.

### **Ways to practically mentor your child's kingdom purpose:**

- Give them room to fail. Rather than dragging them along and barking orders teach them to learn to 'hear' God's voice for themselves.
- Teach them how to hear God.
- Give them space to make decisions and learn how to follow God while still safe in your home.
- Correct mistakes in love. Let them see your support as they attempt to step out on their own.
- Don't force them to be what you want them to be. This has destroyed many a child.

- Teach them that answers lie in God not just in you as a parent. Encourage them to make decisions off of hearing God for their future, not fearing you for their failure.

**Who is the loudest voice in your home: you, the child, or the Holy Spirit?  
Does your child hear God or fear you?**

The Successful Parenting Plan:

1. Master Their Emotions
2. Model The Faith
3. Mentor Their Kingdom Purpose