

"Parenting with a Purpose"

Esther 2:1-18

Introduction

Owne Wister, an old college friend of Theodore Roosevelt, was visiting him at the White House. Roosevelt's daughter, Alice, kept running in and out of the room until Wister finally asked if there wasn't something Roosevelt could do to control her.

"Well," said the President, "I can do one of two things. I can be President of the United States or I can control Alice. I cannot possibly do both."

While there might be a little humor in that comment, the fact is that good parents MUST do both. We have jobs and so many other responsibilities but God has given us our children for only a short period of time. Soon enough, they will leave home and start life on their own. It is our responsibility to get them ready for that departure.

Whenever a parent brings a little baby home from the hospital, they cannot imagine ever saying "good-bye" to that child. Yet, God has graciously given us the teenage years to make it a little easier.

So, let's talk about some counsel that we can get from Scripture that can help us raise up the next generation. It may be our children. Maybe you are raising your grandchildren. Maybe you have adopted a child or you are a mixed family. Regardless of your current scenario, you must take your job seriously and train the next generation.

1. Observe God at work around you (v. 1-4)

a. READ Esther 2:1-4

b. When we read these **first 4 verses**, the author's camera is aimed at a scene playing out in the palace.

1) In **verse 5**, he will pan the camera to a home somewhere in the kingdom ... but for now, we get to listen to a conversation in the palace.

2) What we see in these verses is that the King was ready to get another queen. He sought counsel and a search would begin to find the new queen.

3) When the camera pans to Mordecai's house, what we see is a man who is raising a daughter to fill that role. He doesn't know his daughter will be queen but he is preparing her.

c. This is how it is when we are raising children.

1) We don't know what they will end up doing.

2) We don't know who they will marry.

3) We don't know what opportunities may present themselves.

4) But, we have to get our children ready for whatever God may have in store for them.

d. One verse in the Old Testament powerfully speaks to this truth.

1) **Proverbs 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."**

2) Of course, this means that we should train our children in the ways of the Lord.

- 3) But, it also means that we should tailor our training in the way that he (or she) should go.
 - a) What are they good at?
 - b) What are their interests?
 - c) What might God do with them?
 - d) Begin to point them in that direction when they are just a child.
- 4) Realize that you are equipping an adult in the next generation who will probably get married and influence his or her kids ... and probably influence a lot of other people. You have a limited amount of time to train them for what God might do in their lives. You've got to get them ready.

Now, let's read the next few verses as the camera pans to Mordecai's house. Let's talk about how we can ...

2. Equip your children to be used by God (v. 5-18)

a. Read Esther 2:5-18

b. You children need to know that you love them

- 1) **Esther 2:7** "He was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther, the daughter of his uncle, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman had a beautiful figure and was lovely to look at, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter."
 - a) Esther was Mordecai's cousin. Apparently, her mom and dad had died and she was much younger than Mordecai.
 - b) So, Mordecai brought her into his house and ... look at the last words of vs. 7 ... "took her as his own daughter."
 - c) He didn't just give her a place to stay, some food on the table, and some clothes to wear – he brought her into his family.
 - d) She was his cousin but the Scripture says, he "took her as his own daughter."
- 2) You need to make it clear to the children you are raising in your home that they are dearly loved and are a very important part of your family – regardless of how they came to be in your home.
 - a) In our home, Kim and I have had 3 boys that biologically belong to both of us.
 - b) But, in some of your homes, you have adopted children.
 - c) In other homes, you are raising your grandchildren.
 - d) In still other homes, you are raising children that your spouse had from a previous marriage.
 - e) Or maybe you are raising your cousin like Mordecai.
 - f) Regardless of how those children came to be in your home, the words of our text speak powerfully ... take them "as (your) own daughter (or son)."
 - g) Love them as your very own! Make sure they know that they are a part of your family! There are no favorites. There are no step-children.
 - h) I knew a young, married lady quite a few years ago. She was successful at work and had a great marriage and a couple of children. But, one day she told me she had been battling with issues of self-worth and depression for years. She went on to tell me that her mom had her before her mom divorced. Then, her mom married her step-dad and they had a daughter together. She said that it seemed obvious that

her step-dad treated her sister much better than her. She always felt like her dad's step-child ... and she was battling with the consequences of that injustice many years after she left home.

i) It doesn't matter how your kids came to be in your home, love them fully you're your daughter or son!

3) When we love especially those children who have been brought into our family by means other than natural reproduction, we illustrate how God has loved us and brought us into His family when we were saved.

a) 1 John 3:1 "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are..."

b) Parents, love the little ones in your home. Regardless of how they came to be in your home, do what Mordecai did. "Mordecai took her as his own daughter."

c. You need to be aware of what's going on with your children

1) Esther 2:11 "And every day Mordecai walked in front of the court of the harem to learn how Esther was and what was happening to her."

2) Mordecai demonstrated another parental habit ... good parents keep up with what is going on in their children's life.

a) What are you kids watching on television?

b) What are they viewing on the internet? ("Roadkill on the superhighways." – Adrian Rogers)

c) Who are their friends and who do they spend their time with?

d) Where are they? When will they be back?

3) There will come a time when you no longer look over your child's shoulder. That is talked about in Genesis 2:24 where it says, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife..."

4) But, until then, you have the right and responsibility to keep up with what's going on in your child's life.

a) As your child gets closer to the time when they will leave home, you will get resistance but you can't let up.

b) If you really love them, you will be looking for any signs that they are headed down a wrong road. You love them too much to let them do that ... so you catch things before they get too big or become a habit.

d. You must teach your children the concept of gratitude

1) Esther 2:7 "He (Mordecai) was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther, the daughter of his uncle, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman had a beautiful figure and was lovely to look at, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.

2) One of the things we learn about Esther was that she was beautiful.

a) Now, let's ask the question: "How much control did Esther have over this?"

b) A little bit. She could watch her weight. She could try to keep her skin soft by staying out of the sun. She could wear nice clothes and put on make-up.

c) Regarding make-up, a former pastor once said, "Some Christian denominations believe it is a sin for women to wear make-up. But, personally, I believe it's a sin for some women NOT to wear make-up." (I would NEVER say that. HA)

- d) Esther got cosmetics according to **vs. 9**, but she apparently didn't need them.
- e) She was able to make some minor adjustments to the body she had ... but God gave her that body.
- f) And if she had been full of herself, priding herself in what she had no control over, she would have been ugly. It doesn't take an attractive person long to look ugly if they have a stinking attitude.

3) Teach your children gratitude for what they have received from God:

- a) If your child is born with a higher than usual IQ, or they are considered attractive, or they have some natural talent in sports, or some other great trait that they just happened to be born with, you had better teach them to be grateful. Gratitude will keep them humble ... and "attractive."

b) 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NLT) "Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus."

4) One other principle about beauty:

- a) Realize that "beauty" has been defined differently in every culture.
- b) It is quite possible that if Esther was to walk into this sanctuary, many of us might NOT consider her beautiful.
- c) Different cultures value different things.
- d) God made you who you are. He gave you your body. You are His masterpiece and He sees you as beautiful.
- e) Don't ride the roller coaster of trying to keep up with what a superficial culture's values. Parents, TEACH them this truth.

e. You must help your children grow in 4 areas of life:

- 1) A lot is left unsaid in **Esther 2:4-18**. Other than the few hints that we picked up in our text, we don't really know how Mordecai parented Esther. We just know that he apparently did a really good job.
- 2) So, let's jump to an absolutely wonderful and helpful verse in the New Testament. In this verse, we will see that there are four areas that we really need to work to develop in our children.

3) Luke 2:52 "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man."

4) Help them grow intellectually.

- a) Jesus grew "in wisdom."
- b) Jesus was fully God but He wasn't placed in the manger and moments later spout off, "E=mc²."
- c) Instead, while He was fully God, he laid much of His privileges aside when He came to earth and He went through the same process of learning that you and I do. So, He really did learn. He really did grow in knowledge and wisdom (the application of that knowledge).
- d) Parents, God can use anyone He wants and He can use the most uneducated of persons to do great things. But, that is no excuse for not pushing toward academic excellence. A great education opens up all sorts of possibilities. Push your kids to do well intellectually.

5) Help them grow physically.

- a) Jesus grew “in stature.”
- b) As a carpenter’s son, and living in the first century, he wouldn’t have spent his Saturdays sitting in front of the television while posting pictures on his Instagram account while listening to music. He would have been outside lifting lumber, cutting, hammering, and all sorts of other things that built his muscles. When we read the Gospels and consider the distance between some of the towns and realize that he probably walked most of the time, we can’t help but realize that Jesus was incredibly physically fit!
- c) Parents, encourage your kids take care of their bodies. They only have one body. Help them to eat right ... and not too much. Encourage them to do something that builds fitness and releases excess energy. Help them grow physically.

6) Help them grow spiritually.

- a) Jesus grew “in favor with God.”
- b) As God, Jesus was one with Him. Yet, as fully man, Jesus “grew in favor with God.” That means that His actions, His words, His thoughts brought pleasure to God. In fact, when Jesus was baptized at the age of 30, God said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:17).
- c) Parents, help your kids to grow spiritually. Get them into their Bibles. Help them learn how to pray. Teach them the Gospel. Encourage them on their road to holiness. Teach them about right and wrong, the law and grace.

7) Help them grow socially.

- a) Jesus grew “in favor with man.”
- b) Jesus became someone who others couldn’t ignore. He caught their eye. His words and action impressed them. In fact, at the age of 12, he captured the attention of the religious leaders at the temple.
- c) Parents, your children need to be taught how to mingle well in society. They need to be taught social graces. They need to be taught humility. They need to be taught leadership. There is so much that they need to be taught in this area!

f. Depend upon the Lord and His grace.

- 1) Ultimately, parents, as we do our job and train our children, we realize that “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father...” (James 1:17).
- 2) So, do your job while calling out to Him to work in the lives of your children.

Conclusion

I can imagine no greater joy than as Kim and I grow old to know that our three sons have grown into men who are leading their families in the way of the Lord. Kim and I will be sitting in the “bleachers” and applauding.

3 John 4 (NLT) “I could have no greater joy than to hear that my children are following the truth.”

But, it takes work and a TON of prayer to get to that point. Parents, are you up to the task? I pray that you are.