

GRACE BASED PARENTING

BY: DR. TIM KIMMEL

1. How would you summarize Grace Based Parenting and the premise of the book?
2. In chapter one (p. 9) Kimmel says, “The real test of a parenting model is how well equipped the children are to move into adulthood as vital members of the human race. Notice I didn’t say ‘as vital members of the Christian community.’ We need to have kids that can be sent off to the most hostile universities, toil in the greediest work environments, and raise their families in the most hedonistic communities and yet not be the least bit intimidated by their surroundings. Furthermore, they need to be engaged in the lives of people in their culture, gracefully representing Christ’s love...”

He goes on (p. 11) to say, “God left our families in communities to serve as porch lights, if you will, for the lost people around us.” How does this relate to what you see as the goal of parenting?
3. On pp. 12-15, Kimmel introduces 7 types of Parenting: Fear-Based, Evangelical Behavior-Modification, Image-Control, High Control, Herd-Mentality, Duct-Tape and Life-Support/ 911 Parenting. Which, if any, of these stood out as potential pitfalls for you?
4. Kimmel stresses: “How we view God determines how we parent our children” (p. 16). He also defines God as the perfect parent (p. 21). How will your view of God shape your parenting, for better and for worse?
5. Kimmel says there are three driving needs that each child has: security (met through love), significance (met through purpose) and strength (met through hope). Name a recent example where you either failed or succeeded in meeting one of these needs for your child.
6. Kimmel states that we can help build a significant purpose in our kids by regularly affirming them, when they have our attention and when they are gracefully admonished. Which one of these stood out to you the most and why?
7. Kimmel stresses 4 necessary freedoms for our children- The freedom to be different, vulnerable, candid and to make mistakes. Which stood out to you the most and why?

8. The freedom to be different refers to being “unique,” “weird,” “bizarre,” “strange,” “goofy,” and “quirky” (p. 143). How might this be challenging for you?

9. “Sometimes God deliberately puts things in our children’s lives that make them feel extremely fragile- and He doesn’t take them away” (p. 176). Kimmel uses Jesus’ example for how to demonstrate the freedom to be vulnerable: “Jesus makes people feel comfortable even when He catches them without their makeup. When circumstances scrub off the layers of their self-confidence, and their shortcomings wash away the foundation of their self-righteousness, Jesus isn’t appalled by the blemishes He finds underneath” (p. 164). He says, Not only will there be times when our children are “terribly confused, but they can also get extremely frightened” (p. 166). Name an example when a person responded to your vulnerability the way Jesus did and how it impacted you.

10. How do you intend to help your child navigate their insecurities about their “looks, their social abilities, their intellect, and their economic situation? (p. 179)

11. In effort to foster the freedom to be candid, Kimmel and his wife had “What’s your beef” nights (p. 206). Could you see yourself doing this (why or why not?) and if not, what will you do instead to foster this environment? (See top of p. 186 for more on developing candor in your home)

12. Kimmel ties the freedom to make mistakes to teaching your children how to rely on the Holy Spirit within them (see bottom of p. 217). How can we “encourage our children to struggle with their sin out in the open where [we] can talk about it and direct them to the power of Christ”? (p. 218)

Other topics for discussion:

Safe vs Strong kids (p.32)

Loving our kids based on their needs and best interests vs. ours (p. 52)

Example of the boy eating from the buffet (pp. 56-59)

Helping your children develop skills that enable them toward future greatness (p. 76)

Helping your children develop a spiritual purpose (p. 81)

Encouraging your children to live a great spiritual adventure (p. 113)

Non moral/ Preference issues elevated to spiritual issues (pp. 30-33 ie: the dad judging youth group kids for wearing hats during church)

Legalistic or Cheap grace homes vs grace based parenting (p. 39, 214-215)

Regularly affirming your child (p. 82)

Rejecting what your friends think as most important(p. 146)

Consequences (p. 221)