

## THE 10 COMMANDMENTS OF PARENTING

Saustin Mfuné, GC Children's Ministries  
(Presenter's Notes)

The Ten Commandments presented in this seminar have been adapted from the Bible's Ten Commandments as recorded in Exodus 20:3-17.

### Commandment #1      You Shall Have No Other Interests Beside Your Children

The Bible reminds us that "Children are a heritage from the Lord" (Psalm 127:3). And when these children come into the home, they should take their rightful place. It is unfortunate that many times our interests and work schedules keep us very busy that our children are often times crowded out.

**If you are going to catch fish, you go where the fish are.** *And that is true when it comes to leading and parenting children. If you are going to be an effective leader (parent) who will influence the outcome of children, you need to be where the children are. Be where the action is.*

#### Why it is important to be where the children are:-

1. It helps you **to know your strong points.**
2. It helps you know *your limitations.*
3. It helps you *to be creative.*
4. It gives you chance to learn *and improve on your weak areas.*
5. It empowers you to look for help. And such help could include *experienced Godly people, children's media materials, seminars, and any other material or activity which will help you overcome or improve on your limitation.*
6. It reminds you that you are a *human being and you need to rely on Jesus Christ in everything you do.*
7. You will begin to understand *the meaning of the jargon used by children.*
8. You will begin to see things *from the level of children.* Many times we assume children see things the way we do. This is a wrong assumption. Coming down to one's level is what Jesus did for us. He came down to our level in order to take us up. This is ministry of incarnation. (Solusi University Story)
9. You will be a practical *and not a theoretical parent.*
10. You customize solutions *based on the problems your children are experiencing. You will be scratching where it is itching.*

**Commandment #2**      **You shall not make for yourself any idol from heaven or from earth that detracts your attention from attending to your children. You shall not bow down to these idols. For I am a jealous God. I will visit the results of neglecting your children unto the third and the fourth generation. But showing love and mercy to thousands of parents who do their work faithfully and follow the instructions I have given them on how to parent children.**

Many times as teachers and parents we act as if we have the whole future to train children. We should realize that these kids are just passing through our homes *and classes and therefore urgency should be our watch word.*

### **Lessons for parenting from farmers and builders**

**Farmers:** Farmers know that if they are going to have a good harvest, they need to follow certain principles. And these include:-

- Planting at the right time.
- Good weather.
- Planting together with fertiliser for most crops.
- Good soil.
- The right amount of water

**Builders:**

Those who build houses know that if they are going to have a strong house, they need a strong and deep foundation. And usually the depth of the foundation is in relation to how high the house will rise. And in most cases they even study the composition of the soil.

### **Lessons from farming and building**

- **We can liken good weather to *the empowering home environment.***
- **Fertiliser can be likened to the general *Spiritual activities of the home and your Christian exemplary life.***
- **The depth of the house foundation can be likened to *studying the Bible daily with children.***

### **JUST A REMINDER**

- *By age 2, the personal life style of a child is developed.*
- *By age 3, the character of a child is formed.*

- By age 4, *intelligence of the child has grown more than it will in the next thirteen years.*
- By age 5, *the brain of a child is 90 % developed.*
- By age 6, *the mental and emotional patterns of a child are set.*
- By age 10, *50% of the adult attention span is achieved.*
- And again by age 10, *the value system of a child is established and will be perfected during the rest of his/her growing years.*

**Ellen White, Child Guidance, p.193-195**

- The Foundation of a child is laid in the first three years of the child's life.
- And it is during these years that parents need to bend the tiny twig.

**Remember that all Jochobed and Amram had were 12 years to train Moses.**

### **Idols that Detract Us From Attending To Children**

#### **1. Work:**

It was the Greek philosopher Socrates who once said: "Could I climb to the highest place in Athens, I would lift my voice and proclaim, fellow citizens, why do you turn and scrape every stone to gather wealth and take so little care of your children to whom one day you must relinquish it all?"

#### **2. Visitors and Friends**

#### **3. Amusements**

- **TV (sports, news)**
- **Radio**
- **Websites**
- **Reading**

**Commandment #3      You shall not despise the name of the church, preacher, church administrator or church policies before your children, *for the Lord will not hold such parents guiltless who misuses the names of the church, fellow preachers and church administrators.***

If you . . .

- DESPISE PEOPLE'S SERMONS
- DESPISE CHURCH LEADERS
- DESPISE POLICIES OF THE CHURCH
- . . . BEFORE YOUR CHILDREN, YOU WILL LIVE TO REGRET.

**Commandment #4**      **Remember the times of worship at your home and keep them holy. All the hours you shall work but the times of worship at your home you shall keep them Holy. During worship time at your home, you, your spouse, your children or any workers who are in your home shall not do any work, watch TV, listen to the radio, doze, or read a newspaper. For the Lord has given you many hours to do your things, but during the period of worship you shall suspend everything, for the Lord has blessed the periods of worship at your home and has made them holy.**

**Some tactics used by the devil to disrupt family worship.**

1. Definite time is not necessary.
2. Unexpected visitors.
3. Telephone ringing.
4. Hectic morning programs.
5. "Forced" to conduct worship around your TV or radio programs.
6. Children restless.
7. Tiredness
8. Conducting worship when TV is on and on low volume.
9. Conducting worship while others are eating.

**Some ways to make worship interesting at home**

1. Avoid routine.
2. Have variety.
3. If children are able to read, let them lead out sometimes.
4. Use visual aids.
5. Have a song service.
6. Remember that they are family members and not a church audience.
7. Prepare for the lesson.
8. Let worship be short and interesting.
9. Allow room for interaction.
10. Let family members pray for each other.
11. Simplify concepts to their level.
12. Avoid bringing disciplinary issues during worship time.
13. Don't conduct worship when you are angry.

**Commandment #5**      **Honour your children that their Spiritual days may be long in the land that the Lord has given them.**

Honour and treat them as God treats you. In Ephesians 6:4 the Bible tells us not to provoke our children to anger.

**If you honour your children, you will:-**

- *Avoid demoralising them.*

- *Treat them as candidates for heaven.*
- *Empower them to develop a four-wheel-drive (4x4) mind capability.*

**Commandment #6**      **You shall not kill your children by neither destroying their self-esteem through your actions and words nor by being angry with them from morning till evening.**

**Disciplining Styles**

- Micro Parenting
- Deistic Parenting
- Macro Parenting

REMEMBER THAT DISCIPLINE IS NOT PUNISHING. YOU PUNISH BECAUSE YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT YOURSELF. YOU DISCIPLINE BECAUSE YOU WANT TO BUILD THE CHILD.

The strength of aeroplane wings and high skyscrapers is not in their rigidity but rather in their flexibility. If they were rigid, they would snap and break. But wing's flexibility helps them to navigate through rough winds when flying and for buildings, they are able to stand earth's tremors and strong winds. So is discipline. It's not rigidity that is effective but firm flexibility.

**Commandment #7**      **Thou shall not teach your children to commit adultery and get involved in fornication by not teaching them sex issues. Neither shall you teach them to commit adultery by allowing them to dress in a way that will cause them to commit adultery.**

Teach children sex issues and as you teach, take into consideration their age.

If you find it difficult, use a person whom you and your children respect. But you should be present.

If you don't teach them, they will get Hollywood views of sex.

**Remember . . .**      **TO GIVE SEX INFORMATION ACCORDING TO THE AGE OF YOUR CHILDREN AND DON'T TELL THEM FABLES**

**Commandment #8**      **You shall not steal your children's childhood period by expecting them to behave in a manner that is beyond their developmental stage.**

**Developmental Age**

- Children will act according to their developmental stage - don't give them tasks that are beyond their capabilities.
- Don't expose them to information that is beyond their age. This exposure could be through books, TV, lyrics of some music, etc.
- Don't expect them to behave in church or other gatherings like a grown-up (It is normal for them to fidget).
- Don't discuss church theological issues and controversies with them if they are too young and cannot understand and interpret issues in a matured manner.
- Let them enjoy their childhood. Allow them to develop and mature naturally.

**Commandment #9 You shall not give false testimony against your neighbours by misrepresenting them to your children.**

When children are born, they are *ethnic, tribal, racial and colour blind*.

**Commandment #10 You shall not teach your children to covet by being satisfied with what you have and by not continually manifesting a spirit of materialism. If you are materialistic and not satisfied with what you have, you will be teaching your children to covet your neighbour's things.**

**While all the other commandments address what happens outside the body, the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment addresses what happens inside the human heart (mind). No one can easily tell whether one is coveting or not. This is very dangerous.**

**Children should be taught that happiness does not require an external walking stick; does not depend on the abundance of things you have.**