

Family values are an interesting proposition today. We listen to experts and leaders who abound in insight and perspective on the nuclear family, and have observed the turn of another century with disturbing and mixed signals. While the institution of the family endures tinkering by social architects, we are left to await yet another revealing discovery about parenting and child-rearing. Forgive my cynicism, but **common sense and biblical principles appear to be an unwelcome visitor at these debates!**

Capturing the **big picture** on parenting seems to be of incredible importance. "What does parenting ask and require from me?" seems to be a difficult question to address. Understanding the Family Foundation gives us a place to return to some blueprints for building a family. The subjects of discipline, instruction, creating memories, promoting industry, and pursuing healthy individuality all contribute to this blueprint or master plan.

Mechanisms to accomplish this building process are important. Establishing a Family Partnership and Setting a Course for your household is key. An architect needs a plan, and specific and successive steps to make such a plan a reality. Teaching Self-control and Instructing in Values must be fearlessly tackled by the modern parent. With everyone (and their mother) claiming expertise in parenting, it is critical that we choose intentionality in our teaching of values or be left with the fruits of having such opportunity fulfilled by others. It may "take a village" for some, but for our family it takes a community. And if our "village" doesn't hold to our basic standards or values, they can stay out of our house.

Managing our family is important. "Manage your family or your family will end up managing you." We will consider a variety of mechanisms for evaluation that will help you to keep on track with your overall goals. Your Child's Changing Needs, Family Action Planning, and Family Measurable Goals are just a few of the tools you can use to keep on track. Keeping the Homefires Burning and the Pains and Prizes worksheets can help you to keep the big picture. After all, we are talking about a several decade process!

The resources you will find in this section are by no means comprehensive, they are representative. There are many family styles, but few sets of values that are truly successful!

The next page describes and outlines the stages of parenting.
Review the stages and answer these questions:

1. In what stage do we currently find ourselves?
2. In what stages have we experienced success?
3. In what stages have we blown it?
4. Do I (we) have a view toward an enduring family?

The Stages of Parenting

1 Introduction and response to PARENT PRESENT RESPONSIBILITY

Acceptance...Affection...Discipline

What do my parents want from me?

2 SELF DISCIPLINE to an awareness of Omnipresent Authority.

Character...Value Resolution...Knowledge

What do my parents want from me?

3 Integration to INDEPENDENT RESPONSIBILITY before Omnipresent authority.

Firsthand Morality

Person Adjustments

What do I want from me!?

Letting go accelerates.
Peer pressure increases!

4 Complete INDEPENDENT RESPONSIBILITY before Omnipresent Authority.

Christian & Personal Maturity

What does God want from me!?