

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!?

...The family was given to perpetuate the will of God in the world.
 ...We need friends and good examples to encourage us in this process.
 ...If you're stuck, get help.

DISCIPLINE	INSTRUCTION
MEMORIES	INDUSTRY
INDIVIDUALITY	

DISCIPLINE

- ___ ___ I am committed to discipline that is firm, consistent, non-abusive; and born of principle, discussion, and agreement.
- ___ ___ When do we start and what are our plans and parameters?
- ___ ___ We apply the process of discipline, comfort, and redirection.
- ___ ___ We are pursuing the concept of moving our children solidly toward a life of ruling their own spirit - independent from us.
- ___ ___ We are creative and swift in discipline; forward-moving and emphasizing the positive.

INSTRUCTION

- ___ ___ We emphasize maturity and independent morality, (stages of parenting).
- ___ ___ We provide for and pray for our children to have a spiritual, practical, and relevant understanding of the Scriptures.
- ___ ___ We teach them to be socially effective and yet personally inoffensive.
- ___ ___ We help and prepare them to face the challenge of being in a believing minority.
- ___ ___ We are teaching and modeling how to become a team player before our children.

MEMORIES

- ___ ___ Of time spent enjoying one another in both spontaneous and planned settings and activities.
- ___ ___ Of a father and mother who know how to resolve conflict and remain committed to each other.
- ___ ___ Of a developing friendship with family members. Especially work on:
 - A) The child who is most like you.
 - B) Father to daughter
 - C) Mother to son
- ___ ___ Of our home as a safe place and a refuge from conflict.
- ___ ___ Of a home where others who are in need are helped within the walls and resources of our family.

THE FAMILY FOUNDATION: Continued

INDUSTRY

- ___ ___ We come along side of our children and help them to be good workers.
- ___ ___ We teach and model how to develop & follow through on an interest or project.
- ___ ___ We teach the big picture on planning, executing, and enjoying a completed job.
- ___ ___ Our children know how to work with others to participate toward a common goal.
- ___ ___ We provide follow-up to encourage consistency in task accomplishment.
- ___ ___ We teach and model how to save, give, and spend.

INDIVIDUALITY

We are helping our children to understand:

- ___ ___ Their unique relationship to maleness (Dad) and femaleness (Mom).
- ___ ___ Their complete uniqueness and opportunity as the seed of God in the world.
- ___ ___ How to have the courage to make their own decisions despite pressure from others.
- ___ ___ To understand our nature and its effect on how we think and act.
- ___ ___ The impact of my behavior and attitudes upon peers, as well as those who are older and younger.
- ___ ___ How to be helped to recognize both my strengths and the shortcomings that make me unique.

There are two columns where you can each assess your thoughts on how much progress has been made to date on each of the categories and descriptions listed on this and the previous page.