

# Growing Godly Kids in a Less Than Godly World

## I. Live a life that is counter-cultural.

<sup>18</sup>The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness . . . <sup>21</sup>For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. . . . <sup>24</sup>Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. <sup>25</sup>They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

<sup>26</sup>Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. <sup>27</sup>In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.

<sup>28</sup>Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. <sup>29</sup>They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, <sup>30</sup>slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; <sup>31</sup>they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. <sup>32</sup>Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. —Romans 1:18, 21, 24–32 (NIV)

1. It ain't ever been like this or déjà vu?
  - a. Suppressing the truth
  - b. Committing sexual promiscuity
  - c. Acting out homosexually
  - d. Becoming deprived in their thinking
  - e. Becoming filled with every kind of wickedness

## II. Live a life worth imitating.

*What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.* —Philippians 4:9

1. Demonstrate a love for the Lord and His word.

*For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.*

—1 John 5:3

2. Demonstrate a love for His people.

*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.* —Hebrews 10:23–25

3. Demonstrate a love for His purposes.

*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.* —Ephesians 2:8–10

### III. Live a life of unconditional love.

*“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!”*

—Matthew 23:37

#### 1. Unconditional love expressed through time together

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

—John 1:14

#### 2. Unconditional love expressed through celebrating their uniqueness

*For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.*

—Psalm 139:13–14

#### 3. Unconditional love expressed through confession and forgiveness

*Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

—Ephesians 4:32

### IV. Live a life that embraces the goodness of authority.

*And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”*

—Matthew 28:18

#### 1. Embracing authority in your own life

*But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.*

—1 Corinthians 11:3

#### 2. Embracing your authority as a parent

*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right . . . Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

—Ephesians 6:1, 4

- You are the parent.
- Save discipline for disobedience.
- Keep working on consistency.
- The displeasure of the discipline must exceed the pleasure of the disobedience.
- Have a long-term perspective and *never* give up.
- Remember...parenting mistakes are not the end of the world.
- Effective discipline requires parental sacrifice: involvement, time, wisdom, and grace.
- Focus on encouraging your children.
- Don’t exasperate your children.

*“Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”*

—Ephesians 6:4

- Help your children develop their own personal convictions.

### 3. Embracing the authority of God's word

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God[a] may be complete, equipped for every good work.* —2 Timothy 3:16

## V. Live a life of expectation.

*But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him" —* —1 Corinthians 2:9

### 1. Expectation of seeing the best in your children

*Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.* —Psalm 127:4-5

### 2. Expectation that God is more powerful than the enemy

*Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.* —1 John 4:4

### 3. Expectation of a legacy worth leaving

*. . . things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments . . .*  
—Psalm 78:3-7

## Takeaways

1. These are difficult days, but the challenges are not completely new.
2. Our children are imitators. They will imitate. Our challenge is to live in such a way that they want to imitate us in following Christ fully.
3. Being part of a vibrant local church that our children look forward to attending is critical.
4. It is important to give our children a vision for living beyond themselves for kingdom purposes.
5. Rules without relationship produce rebellion. Relationship without rules produce chaos. Children need both rules and relationship.
6. Our children are made by Him in His image. We are to celebrate that and not try to make them into *our* image.
7. We are to create an atmosphere in which admitting fault, confessing, and experiencing forgiveness is the norm.
8. Embracing and modeling the goodness of authority is critical to our children's development.
9. Our role as parents is to use our authority to train our children while not discouraging them.
10. Focus on seeing the best in your children and affirming them, rather than catching them doing wrong and correcting them.
11. Understand that the battle is first a spiritual one—and thus needs to be fought with prayer and the power of the Gospel to help our children fall in love with the Lord.

## Discussion Questions

1. Of the three areas worth imitating, which come easiest and which do you find most difficult?
2. What are your greatest challenges in loving your children unconditionally?
3. How can you more fully help your children see the goodness in following authority?
4. What one area would you like to work on in the coming months?