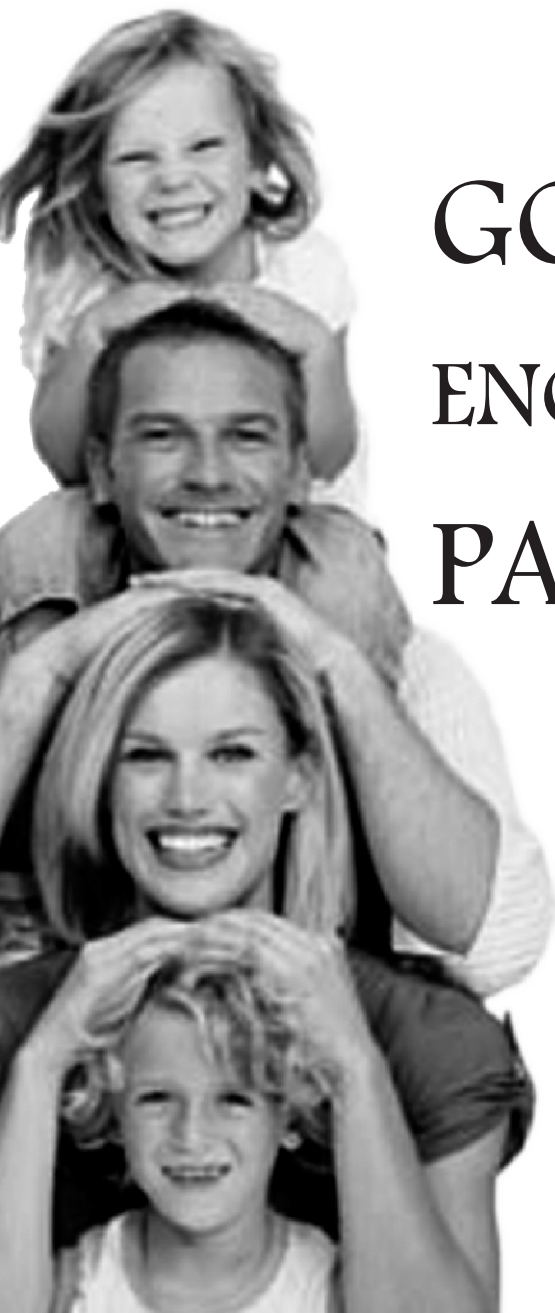


*Quiet Time Series on  
First Principles of Parenting*

# GOOD ENOUGH PARENTING



*Dr. Ashok Kumar Prabath*



## **First Principles in Parenting**

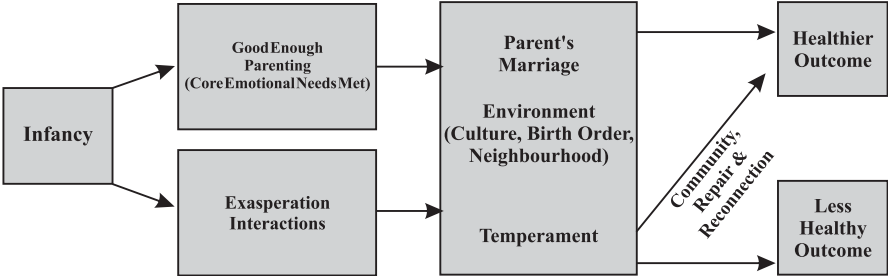
**Proverbs 23:15-26**, Solomon in these verses, was so vividly expressing how much the parents get overjoyed to see the children turn out as righteous and wise persons in their adulthood. This is the dream of every parents. This Parenting program strives to achieve that. Practising the principles of parenting takes courage passion and perseverance or as some have said, blood, sweat and tears. Because of implementing the biblical principles of parenting, you would experience joy and satisfaction when you are emotionally connected to your child, when you see them hold on to the values you shared and face their world with ease and confidence through deep and thriving relationships resulting in greater level of success. Parenting is a very important responsibility that each and everyone of us after the marriage take it up or get involved in by default even without any training. For any responsibility like driving, to be a doctor, to build a building etc., we expect people to be well trained and how much more we should seek training for raising up our children. Even though we expect parenting to be intuitive, in practice we land up reacting to our kids based on our own past childhood emotional dysfunctions. Parents are good at meeting the physical (food, clothing & shelter), educational, medical and social needs of our children very intuitively. However, parents are unaware of children's **CORE EMOTIONAL NEEDS** and it is counter intuitive for them to meet those needs. Kids themselves do not know when they are emotionally needy. As water, sun light, air and nutrients are the core needs for plant life, children must also have their core emotional needs met in order for them to be mentally and emotionally healthy. The core emotional needs are so important and when they are not met, children go through a feeling of exasperation (that is frustration of core emotional needs and trauma ) and develop dysfunctional behaviors. The **FOUR** plus **ONE** core emotional needs of children are :

- 1.Connection and Acceptance
- 2.Healthy Autonomy
- 3.Reasonable limits
- 4.Realistic Expectations

Plus one **SPIRITUAL VALUES** and **COMMUNITY**



See the flow chart below that shows the two pathways the kids go through in general and how they interplay to bring out Healthier and Less Healthy outcome in the kids.



**Today’s practical :** Father and Mother discuss together about their past years of parenting and both jointly take responsibility for the healthy or unhealthy outcome on each child. Pray together and Commit to get trained in this area of Parenting by reading the Good Enough Parenting book together every day and attending for parenting classes.

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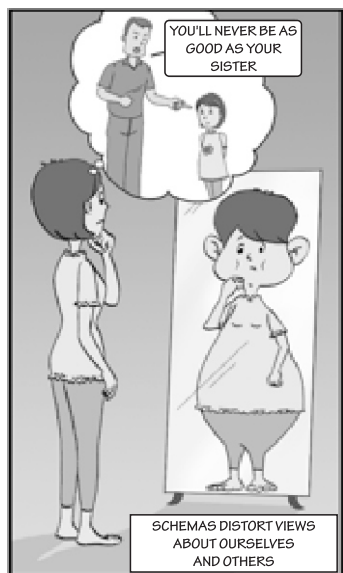
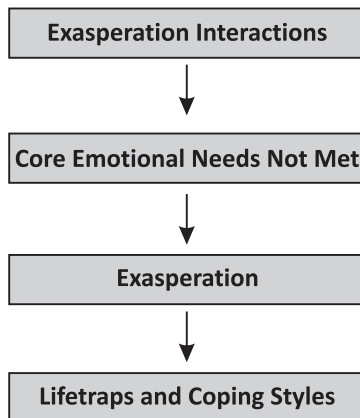
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## Avoiding the **EXASPERATION INTERACTIONS**

**Ephesians 6:4,** Here Paul talks about as parents we should not exasperate our children. Do not exasperate means we should not discourage, embitter, frustrate or provoke them to anger. Exasperation means frustration of the child's core emotional needs and an experience of trauma. Though experiencing frustration is part of life, the distinction we need to make is between occasional events and moments of frustration **VERSUS** a life style of repeated frustration and trauma that the child has to experience as a result of the exasperation interaction from the parents. When this happens the child will be growing up without the core emotional need being met.



This continued state of exasperation eventually shapes a child's world view and affects his way of thinking. The child's thoughts about himself and others become distorted. Parents who love their children make this mistakes in a subtle and unintentional way. Through research Parenting counselors have come up with a list of 8 exasperation interactions parents have with their children as as shown in the next page.

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**Today’s practical :** Put a no. between 1 to 10 capturing the severity of the exasperation interaction that you feel is experienced by your kid. (high score means more severe)

Sl.No	Exasperation Interactions	Child 1	Child 1	Child 1
1.	Belittling			
2.	Perfectionistic and Conditional			
3.	Controlling			
4.	Punitive			
5.	Emotionally Depriving and Inhibitting			
6.	Overprotective			
7.	Pessimistic			
8.	Overly Permissive			

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Exasperation Interaction - 'BeLittling'

As parents we might have observed that there are specific interactions that seem to always cause exasperation in children. This exasperation in children eventually leads to children experiencing frustration of core emotional needs (their core emotional needs repeatedly not being met) and later in adulthood may be remembered as trauma. We call this exasperation interaction. So, exactly how do we exasperate our children. There are eight different exasperation interactions experienced by children mostly from their parents. We will be looking at this in this week. They are Belittling, Controlling, Perfectionist and Conditional Love, Emotionally Inhibiting and Depriving, Punitive, Over Protective, Pessimistic and Overly Permissive. Today we will talk about **BELITTLING**.

**Prov 11:12 (NLT)** The verse clearly telling us that it is much more prudent to be silent than using words belittling others.

**Prov 12: 8 (NLT)** We need to be aware that our words are having power to cut and cause bleeding, pain, trauma in someone's heart and mind and it also has power to bring healing. It is our choice how we use the words wisely to be healing or unwisely that create wounds in the hearts of our children.

**Belittling** means to consider or speak of our children as less valuable and less important, make them to feel small than they really are. It is an interaction in which children feel a put down. Children feel belittled when parents make fun of their children, call them names, make derogatory remarks about things that are important to their kids or disparage their looks. Some parents think that humiliation is the best way to bring about change in their children. But these things make the children feel belittled. Children's need of connection and acceptance will not be met.



They develop a negative view of themselves such as feeling flawed or defective. This Belittling Behaviour of the parents is more connected to parents own childhood issues of deep pain and hurt that were not dealt with properly. They are angry most of the time and have no positive outlook on life. It is been said that the children are the products of the words spoken to them. Words spoken by people who love them and do not love them. Words spoken by people who Care for them and do not care for them. Children from the time they are conceived in the mother’s womb till the age of 6 or 7, they are constantly taking information from their external environment, which constructs their belief system about themselves and about the way that they need to respond to the people. As parents the words we speak to them has a long lasting impression in the mind set of the child. So, repeated statements of belittling from parents causes exasperation to the child which eventually leads to blocking of children’s core emotional needs from being met.

**Today’s Practical :** Ask each of your kid if when do they feel put down by you. Which specific comments of yours make them feel humiliated by you.

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## Day 4

### Exasperation Interaction - 'Perfectionist and Conditional Love'

**Romans 5:6-10**, God's love is unconditional love. While we were still sinners and God's showed his own love. Even when our actions were like that of God's enemies, God reached out to us through christ. God's love did not stop when we fell short of his expectation. So we as parents should watch out for her hearts and not put conditions to show love for our children. Our love for our children should go beyond whether they meet our expectations or not. Some Parents demand perfection from their children and are only satisfied when things go a certain way (and children rarely match these kinds of expectations). These demands put an incredible pressure on the children who become frustrated and sometimes traumatised and their core emotional needs are therefore not met. **P**arents who cause this kind of exasperation usually care very much about how they are percieved by others and how they look in the society. These parents in their drive to look good care do not care that their children are feeling sad, diappointed or fearful. They are highly competitive parents. Since they view their children as an extension of themselves - if the children perform well in school they feel they have done well and if children fail they feel it is their failure. They withhold affection and love as a result of their disappointment and it will be shown in their body language and words as well. Life for the child is constantly filled with criticism. Parents own percieved shame about a certain achievement not being met by children becomes more important than the children's feelings. As a result, children feel unhealthy guilt and shame. Overtime, this becomes a frustrative and traumatic experience and can cause a lot of anxiety and fear for the child. Child feels loved by parents only on the condition of perfect performance otherwise love is withheld and rejected. This makes the children feel exasperated.

**Today's Practical :** Have you had perfectionistic and conditional love approach towards your kid ? Have you been living your life through the kids and not giving them their space to enjoy their childhood ? Kindly talk to your kid and check if they felt that they were treated with that approach consistently ? Make a decision to repent and communicate that to your kid.



**Genesis 27: 5-13.**

Rebekah did not give Jacob any room for his own preferences and choices. Look also at the similarity of her words in **Genesis 27:13** and in **Genesis 27:43**. How did Rebekah come across to Jacob. Do what I say? Rebekah was more than just a little controlling of Jacob. He had to follow his mother's wishes. From the way she spoke to him there was not much of a discussion. She was so direct and simply told Jacob what to do. Jacob did not put up much resistance, Why? From a young age he was subject to his strong mother's will. He complied but in heart he might have felt rotten. He probably knew that cheating his brother's birthright was wrong, but with a strong controlling mother's voice in head, it eventually became part of his own inclination. In fact if he had not left home but had gotten married nearby, there would be a good chance that Jacob would have been closer to his mother than to his wife, which is a recipe for a disastrous marriage. Like Rebekah, are we living our dreams through our children - basically using our children to fulfill our ego and ambitions for our own glory in the society.

Over controlling is another way parents exasperate their children. One of the reason is parents own childhood issue of enmeshment lifetrail. These parents are enmeshed with their children. They will not permit their children to feel differently from them. They will force their children to age inappropriate information from their own personal lives like their own marriage conflicts, their own loneliness. These type of parents do not let the children express their own feelings but rather dictate how their children should feel and think about the needs of their enmeshed parents all the time. Enmeshed parents would instill a strange kind of loyalty in their children. Another reason for parents to interact in a very controlling way is because of the fear that their children will make wrong decisions and use bad judgment. Children with such experiences do not feel that they have room to be themselves which creates frustration of their core emotional need.

**Today's practical :** How much are you an over controlling parent ? Put a no between 1 to 10 and rate yourself. counter check it with your spouse. Decide to be nurturing like you would handle a plant by pouring water and nutrients and allowing themselves to grow on their own.



Exasperation Interaction - 'Punitive'

**Proverbs 13:24**, The word “rod” is translated from the Hebrew word shebet. A shebet is a shepherd’s staff or a king’s scepter, and it symbolizes authority. A shebet was used to guide sheep and to protect them by fighting off predators - not to strike the sheep. Using the word shebet, God gives parents the authority and responsibility to discipline – a word meaning to teach, (guide and train) – their children. Conversely there are a myriad of verses in the New Testament that go against this aggressive and punitive parenting style:

**I Thess. 2:7**, Mother is known for the tender care towards her children.

**Gal. 5:22, 23b**, Being punitive is not one of the fruit of the spirit. But love, joy, kindness and temperance are the fruits of a parent who is **BORN** of the **SPIRIT** and **Died to Flesh**.

**Cor. 13:4-8**, Love is kind and patient and not easily angered. The damage and the emotional trauma done is mainly because of the **ANGER** of the parents towards children either expressed verbally or physically. Matthew 9:9-14, Jesus would love to hang out with our children who are ‘sinners’ according to the parents. His approach would be God desires to show Mercy and call the sinners to become righteous than a punishment approach. Being Punitive means being Punishment driven for every little thing that others do wrong. Not driven by grace. The children feel overwhelmed and heavy laden with punishment for displaying certain emotions or for mistakes that are conventional as opposed to moral. The children are made to feel guilty even for past mistakes. Parents behave like this because they grew up in such family environment. They emphasis justice and truth rather than mercy and put their kids in dog house every time they feel a sin has occurred.

**Today’s Practical** : Ask the children have you spanked them with anger. Apologize for it and give them the freedom to point out to you even during the discipline if you approach them with **ANGER**. Pray and decide to be **GRACEFUL**. Think and do like What Would **JESUS DO** ?



## Day 7

### Exasperation Interaction- ' Emotionally Depriving and Inhibiting '

**Mathew 11: 18-19**, Jesus had a reputation of someone who loves to have fun eating and drinking and being friendly with all kinds of people. His lifestyle was so fulfilled and partying people accused him of being glutton and drunkard. Jesus was emotionally nurturing people and not emotionally depriving people. Eventhough Jesus is son of God, he did not live socially and emotionally disconnected to the people around him.

**John 11:35**, Eventhough Jesus has all ability to solve any problems, this short verse shows how jesus was expressing his emotions and connected with empathy towards people which is very nurturing.

**John 21:15-17**, Jesus kept asking Simon if he loves me feed the sheep and the lamb. Through this he defined his ministry which is all about nurturing souls... starting with our own children. As parents we may end up in this life style of exasperating the children by emotionally depriving them of empathy, comfort and guidance. Parents who fall in this unhealthy life style want their children to learn how to behave and be calm. They do not particularly like passion including crying. Noise is a nuisance whether stemming from joy, happiness, pain or hurt. These type of parents do not like to talk about emotions and feelings. Sometimes parents emotionally deprive their children by being too busy for them. When children are raised by baby sitters and grandparents they do not get adequate empathy and guidance from the parents and experience exasperation. Some parents are incapable of being warm, affectionate, nurturing and showing empathy because of their own upbringing. Some parents may go through such difficult times in marriage and they are consumed with the marital problems and have little left over to emotionally give to kids. Some parents may get hurt by children's behaviour and react by switching off from the children which may cause exasperation of being emotionally deprived for the children.

**Today's Practical** : Go out for icecream together as a family. Share some jokes to your kids and laugh together. Decide to stick to a daily schedule of spending time with the kids and engage them in an emotional level.



**Prov 29:25, John 16:33, Mathew 28:20**

Fear should not be our base in parenting. It will take us down. Trust in the lord would make us to be confident parents. Jesus told his disciples that in this world they would experience troubles but He promised that He would be with them in the midst of these trials. The over protecting parent bases most if not all of their parenting decisions on Fear and Insecurity. Fear and worry is the motivator and basis for this parents action.

Parents who are overprotective are excessively worried about their children for the smallest of issues such as them being hurt while playing or them being sick when caught in a light rain. They convey unrealistic expectations to their children by their over reaction which is out of proportion to the actual situation. These parents are living out their own fear through their children's life. These parents need to realise from the time of birth the child is on a path to independence. This is how children grow and mature. The children must learn the skill of Independent decision making and problem solving.

**Today's Practical :** Ask your kids what are some things that they wanted to do that you stopped them from doing because of the reasons of your fear. Discuss with your spouse as well and make those changes. Today you join with them or allow them to do one of the things that you were holding them back from doing because of your fear.

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Exasperation Interaction- ‘ Pessimistic ’

Pessimistic means being negative.

**Hebrews 11: 1-3, Romans 14:23**

Faith is defined here as something we are sure but we do not see. Being pessimistic (negative mind and thinking) means not having faith and not seeing things with faith. What we see today is not made out of visible but invisible. Many times as parents especially the so called educated parents think ourselves as very intelligent and analyse every aspect of the visible thing in and around children’s life. Where there is negativism there is no faith. Where there is no faith, there is no pleasing god. Where there is no pleasing god, there is only sin. So anything that we think, say or do that does not come from faith is sin. Many times in the name of being realistic, we operate in negativism without faith. Children become exasperated when they repeatedly hear from their parents that the glass is half empty. The same reality could be perceived as that the glass is half full. This kind of parents usually justify their negative approach as being realistic and through. They do not want their kids to be disappointed in life by being unrealistic.

They think they are preparing the kids for the worst and to face the horrible world. This has so much to do with their childhood of growing up in a negative family environment in which they are afraid of making mistakes. They find it easier not to be hopeful at all than get disappointed, hence get negative. Children will experience exasperation because of such negative interactions from their parents.

**Today’s Practical :** Say to each child 10 positive statements about their life / world.

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Exasperation Interaction-‘ **Overly Permissive** ’

**1Samuel 2:12-24, 29-30,**

**We** see in these passages how Eli has been overly permissive that lead his children completely unguided and undisciplined. Eli's sons took by force the meat from people who wanted to sacrifice it for God and were sexually exploiting women at the Tabernacle where the Israelites came to worship. Eli told his sons that they should not do this, but took no action to actually stop them from continuing in their evil behaviour toward the people of God. This looks like the Permissive parenting life style of Eli with his children. Probably he was not Consistently involved guiding the children or the other reason may be he did not have good connection with his children to be confident to take actions of discipline beyond just telling them. His Overly Permissive approach led to the situation where God says to Eli, “ You honor your sons more than you honor me”. From then on the whole family goes down to destruction.

Parents whose interactions are overly permissive make look like that they do not cause exasperation to children but on the long run make the children experience exasperation because of lack of discipline and guidance to respect boundaries. These parents instead of proactive positive parenting they are simply not there in the lives of children. They are too busy with their own thing or not available for the children.

**Some** parents feel guilty for not getting involved with their children so they over react by not expecting children to respect boundaries or learn proper discipline. Some parents may be lazy to get involved on a consistent basis others are not comfortable getting involved in difficult emotions or issues of children. So these parents distract their kids from emotions by letting them watch loads of TV.



They also allow their children to get away with lot of mischief before they even say anything. Eventually when children do feel guided by their parents they develop a feeling of insecurity about the direction they are heading and also feel disconnected from their parents. This is how the overly permissive interactions causes Exasperation on children.

**Today’s Practical :** Do a devotional on this passage with your children and let them know how much God wants you as a parent to be involved in raising them up with Discipline and by setting boundaries. Teach them to respect the Boundaries set in their life and with other relationships.

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Day 11

### Dealing with your past ( Parents own Childhood)

Your Past comes in the way of connecting with your kids. Your Exasperation Interaction is caused because of your past triggers. We conveniently blame it on our children's behaviour and fail to realise the way we behave is connected to our unhealed past emotional issues. Capturing what triggers us in our kids behavior and why do we have such reactions patterns will help us understand and connect with our own childhood traumatic experiences. Our annoying reactive behavior towards the kids may keep getting repeated. The solution is to get to the root. You behave negatively and harmfully because you feel that way. You feel negatively because you think negatively. Your negative thoughts and beliefs bring about negative behavior in our relationship with your kids. Focus on behavior change is just treating the symptom. Getting to the root of dealing with our thinking will produce long lasting change.

**Proverbs 4:23..** "Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts." (TEV)

**Proverbs 23:7..** " For as he thinks in his heart, so is he." (NKJV). We all develop certain thinking pattern during our childhood. Sadly many of us have had some emotionally traumatic experiences in our childhood. A child who is sexually molested by a relative might think that he cannot **TRUST** any authority figure. A child bullied at school may think she is **UNLOVABLE**. A child berated by his parents might think he is **WORTHLESS**. In this way the negative thinking pattern developed in our childhood carry over into our adulthood and in our Parenting! For some of us the childhood makeup is so strong that it happens to be a roadblock for us becoming functional and healthier parents.



In **Proverbs 2:1-5**, We get the advice that if we look out for insights, we will find them. Valuable insights into our selves can deepen our relationships. Our dysfunctional behavior is linked with negative mind distortions because of not having our core emotional needs met in our childhood. So to identify and become aware of the distortions in our mind, it is helpful to understand our past childhood. We cannot change what happened in our childhood, but we can change the meaning and understanding we give to the past experiences and emotional traumas which make up our childhood. Similarly understanding our kids core emotional needs will help us to empathize them better. We are better able to accept them as Jesus accepted us for who they are not for who we think that they should be. We can understand that our reactions are not really so much about us, but about the way our kids behavior reminds us of old hurts and pain. By having this awareness the parents can work to weaken our negative mental distortions by strengthening our healthy spiritual side.

**Romans 12:2**, Here we are asked not to conform to the pattern of the worldly distortions and negative distorted behavior. Our mind must be renewed. Our thinking must be renewed. We need to have new principles, new inclinations, new dispositions and new designs. When this happens we not become Saved Christians but also Healed Christians. As healed husbands and wife we will be able to grow in our love connection. Choosing to grow in awareness will free us to explore new ways of thinking and behaving.

**Today's Practical :** Ask your kids What they think is your predominant coping style towards them of the three below when you are triggered? 1. Surrendered (Fright), 2. Avoidant (Flight), 3. Counterattacking (Fight).

**Be Vulnerable** to your child and share a Traumatic experience from your childhood and express how it affected you. Express your fears and weakness and need.



**Romans 7:14-25**, Here Paul writes about our two sides. one is the healthy spiritual side. The other is the unhealthy sinful side that we seem to kind of helplessly get trapped into. Some sins are very obviously evil like lying, theft, adultery, smoking and drinking. We have gained strong convictions over them and repented. Whereas the sins of negative moody reactions may be seen sticking with us as part of our personality. These negative harmful lifestyle arises out of core distorted beliefs and distorted views and about ourselves and others. Driven by our own distorted views and beliefs, our reactions to life situations are completely overboard (out of scale and out of shape). These are the ones we need to identify and develop Awareness over their pattern and triggering affect on each other. Unlike the obvious sin list in **Galatians 5:19**, this sin list of distorted negative mind and behavior is not very obvious to us. The list has many distorted negative patterns of mind. Like feeling the Abandonment, high Mistrust, Emotionally deprived, Defectiveness or Shame, Social Isolation, highly Dependent, Very Vulnerable to Harm, Enmeshed or undeveloped, feeling of Failure, Entitlement as someone special, lack of Self-Discipline, Subjugation (submit to others), Self-Sacrifice, Approval Seeking, Negativity (pessimism), Emotional inhibition, Hypercritical ness and Punitiveness. All these negative distortions tend to develop inside our mind if the positive emotional needs are not provided and met in our childhood by our parents. For example, adequate nurturing (instead of abandonment), proper protection with out abuse (instead of abuse), emotionally support (instead of emotion deprivation), appreciation (instead of criticism of defects and shame), social inclusion (instead social isolation) etc., were not provided during your own childhood then your core emotional needs will not be met. Thus resulting in these dysfunctions of mind carrying up to their adulthood and parenting. When the kids do not come up to the parents expectation then the parents get triggered and cope in one of the three ways : 1. Avoidant (Flight) 2. Counterattacking (Fight). These coping styles may lessen the parents pain but cause heavy Exasperation on the kids. So none of the above are right coping style. Being Vulnerable is the right coping style.



Day 12

### **The Core Emotional Need of Connection & Acceptance**

**1Peter 4:8**, Peter talks about deep love...that is the love that connects and accepts and that love covers over thousands of others (including your children's) sin. Our children need this Connection of deep love towards Parents without any condemnation. **Romans 15:7**, We all have this need to be accepted as Christ accepted us. Our Children also have the same need deep in their heart to be accepted by parents for who they are with their strengths and weaknesses, flaws and all. ! The core emotional need of connection and acceptance can be defined as the state children live in when they feel completely attached to their parents in a healthy affectionate bond with empathic understanding. When this need is met and your connection with your children is strong then not only will your children love and respect you but they will enjoy being with you. When this need is met children will naturally imitate their parents values and this in turn will help them eventually have the conviction to resist being drawn to unhealthy delinquent behaviour, beliefs and ideologies. When parents meet this need of connection and acceptance the child will develop the traits and beliefs of **TRUST**, Self-Acceptance and Openness, Emotional fulfilment and intimacy, Belonging and Affinity, Emotional Spontaneity and Expressiveness and Mastery and Success. The foundation of parenting is that parents must connect with their children empathically and not cause exasperation.

**Today's Practical :** Both parents together write a card or note to each child expressing how much you not only love them but LIKE them and they are such a joy and blessing to both of you. Write 3 things you like in each kid and share with them and all pray thanking God.



Day 13

**Do not show Favouritism among children.**

**Gen 25:19-34**

Favouritism blocks effective communication at the heart level. It prevents people from being vulnerable with each other about their feelings when they feel they are disliked, or that they have fallen out of favor. For this patriarch's family, much was lost in the early years. They lost out on what might have been fantastic times together. They could have had so many great memories together as a family. Each of the son could have turned out much more well-rounded if they had tapped into the strengths of both of their parents. In the end, favouritism blocked each parent, Isaac and Rebekah, from meeting the core emotional need for connection and acceptance in Jacob and Esau, respectively. At most, they got it from one parent only. Favouritism breeds jealousy and results in tiffs with our siblings, which in turn, creates scars and gets carried into our adulthood.

**Today's Practical :** Talk between the couples to bring out any perception of favoritism from any of you to any of the kids. If such perception exists today clarify it to each kid separately and put it to rest.

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**Quality Time with Kids Takes Time**

**Mark 6: 30-32**

Here we see Jesus taking his disciples out for a special Quality time. He knew that his disciples needed that time to get refreshed. He invested on that time to show them how much they are special and important. Even otherwise we see Jesus spending lots of time with his disciples taking them to wedding at Cana not only for prayer times and preaching sessions. That is the way Jesus raised up his disciples who finally were ready to die for Him. As parents who are trying to raise our own kids to be future disciples should take some time out and invest on Quality time with our kids. For many of us this is not natural. But you need to develop a sense of discipline and do this. Quality time meets the core emotional need of the child that is Connection and Acceptance.

For busy parents, if you do not set aside time for your kids you are communicating that they are not valued by you and they are not worthy for your time. Again it is not the quantity but the Quality of time that creates positive unforgettable memories in the minds of the children. Structured and planned time with your kids creates Quality time.

**Today's Practical :-** Commit to regular one to one Time with each child every week for 1 to 2 hours. Commit to dinner time of 30 minutes together with all kids without any agenda.

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**Build Connection in LOVE**

**1Corinthians 13:13 , Colossians 3:14, 1 John 4:18**

Understanding that the greatest of virtues is love, should motivate us to realize its power in binding the parents with kids in unity. The key test that shows if the relationship between the parents and children is built on love or not is by the display of fear among the children. ( Some may argue to have some level of healthy fear is good but we need to aim for connection through **LOVE** as the bible says perfect love drives out fear). When the relationship is connected in Love there will be no place for fear, insecurity, hiding and cheating. To grow in Love connection towards children parents need to learn to accept children with out judgement as Jesus accepted them with out punishment and fear.

**Today’s Practical :** Celebrate and enjoy together with your kids by having fun time for 2 hours. May be outing to park, beach or restaurant without mobile. Focus is on fun not teaching or lecture so as to drive the fear.

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Day 16

**Accept Child's Feeling not necessarily their Behaviour**

**COLOSSIANS 3;12-17**, Feel for others (mainly your kids) as these verses characterise.

**MATHEW 7: 12** , This verse teaches the golden rule of do to others what you would have them do to you in everything. The least or sometimes the most we want from others is that we should be understood properly. For this to happen we want others to give us a patient hearing and empathise with our feelings, we though others may not agree or accept with the choices of our behaviour. So let us the do the same for others ... the empathy and validation of feelings. This principle applies to handling the feelings of our children as well.

For many parents this is confusing. They think that the two are one and the same thing, but they are actually different. We connect with our kids when we empathise with their ups and down. However this does not mean that we will always agree with the behaviour that may have accompanied their feelings. For example a child may feel sad when left out of a game between his siblings and respond by throwing temper tantrum. We need to separate the feelings from the behaviour. as parents we need to process the feelings of rejection and empathise with our child but after that is done, we need to then voice our disapproval of his behaviour ( not him or his feelings...they both are accepted) and if necessary apply an appropriate consequence for his unacceptable behaviour. We need to communicate that there are some behaviours that are acceptable and then there are some that are not. Learn this key question: “ How to talk so kids will listen and How to listen so Kids will talk”

**Today's Practical** : Memorise this statement to Say to your child daily, ‘ I care about how you feel and I want to treat your feelings with respect’. Write 1 thing **YOU** (not your children) can change that would make your kids to connect with you on feeling, emotional level.



## Processing Children's Difficult emotions

### **Proverbs 17:22 and Proverbs 18:14**

These verses are clearly showing that a crushed spirit is painful and we need to be aware of the damage it causes to our personality and mental health. We all humans are **EMOTIONAL BEINGS**. Trying to deny or ignore this leads to unhealthy way of processing our emotions. As Parents we need to be aware that our kids go through emotions as we go through. During these emotions they feel pain though these pain maybe subtle or intense. As we help them to get in touch with this pain and feel it they start to understand that their pain is valid. The kids need our help to enable them to respond to the pain in a healthy way. Several experts have given valuable guidelines on how to process these feelings in children (both young and old) in a healthy way.

**1. Parents be aware of which type of emotion your child is feeling.** This involves interpreting the verbal expressions, tone and non-verbal expressions of the child. Common type of emotions are - joy, excitement, happiness, contentment, longing, anger, loneliness, embarrassment, fear, shame, sadness, feelings of betrayal, helplessness, depression, feeling unwanted or rejected.

**2. See the child's feelings as an opportunity to connect with them at an emotional level.** This will strengthen the bond between the parent and the child. Parents should not rush into giving solutions. Both the tone of your voice and body language is crucial in communicating this message to them. **Do not make fun of child's feelings that make you feel uncomfortable.** Do not get angry or condemn or judge them for their state of feelings.

**3. Draw the child out verbally to be able to express these emotions or feelings and to label these feelings or emotions correctly.** Communicating to the child that you care for their feelings and respect their feeling reassures the child...



..This process will train the child ( and in the beginning, the parent ) to process his feelings and there after cope in a healthy way.

4. **Validate** the emotions, then show empathy and compassion to the child. Again parents should not rush into giving solutions. **GENTLY** Impress on the child even though all feelings are acceptable not all behaviour is acceptable. The behaviour has limits that child needs to watch out.

5. **At** a suitable time, collaborate with the child and help resolve the issue that triggered.

**Today’s Practical :** See if you can pick up any emotions you child is facing today that you help with processing. Also share with your kid that you are learning to identify and process the emotions. Ask them which emotion in you that makes them uncomfortable and then share which emotion in them that makes you uncomfortable. Express that you are committed to change and also help them to process theirs.

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Day 18

## **Communication with your CHILDREN**

**James 1: 19-21,**

**How would your kids rate your communication with them ? Is it one way communication or two ways ?** The verse here instructs us to be quick to listen and slow to speak. With kids especially we are quick to speak and not bothered much to listen. Empathic Listening to your child is the key component to good communication. It means we have to listen with our heart than our mind. Listen quietly and attentively. Acknowledging the child's feelings with comforting words. Give the feeling a name. Give the child her wishes in Fantasy.

**All Communication involves,**

- 1.Words -10%,
- 2.Tone of Voice - 30% and
- 3.Non-Verbal Cues - 60%  
(facial expression & Body language).

**So it is not what you say. More important is how we say.** This skill of communication is so vital for us to meet the core need of connection and acceptance of our kids.

**Today's practical :** Ask each child to rate between 1 to 10 how much they like your communication skills. Take feed back from your kid how you can improve.

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### **Core Emotional Need of Healthy Autonomy**

**Ecclesiastes 9:10**, Whatever your hands finds to do, very much, do it with all your heart and might.... Here, the encouragement is about expressing your best self in what you find as your passion or that suits you or fits you. It is not that some one forces you or controls you to do. The best motivation is from within you...as you choose to do something....that way you would excel. The children need that similar encouragement...to pursue something as their passion to bring value in the society or picking things that they can excel - taking up a meaningful personal challenge working for the betterment of the society.

The core emotional need of Healthy Autonomy and performance can be defined as helping our children develop their own personalities, abilities and self confidence as they grow into separately functioning healthy adults. The need for autonomy is the need to be self determined and to have a choice in the initiation, maintenance and regulation of activity. Any occurrence which undermines children's feeling of autonomy and leaves them feeling controlled would decrease their inner, intrinsic motivation. Inner motivation is what children feel when they desire to do something out of passion or personal interest. Children feel very satisfied when they are able to do certain things themselves. Each victory and new skill adds to their overall self esteem and their intrinsic motivation. The more they accomplish by themselves the more confident they will feel and so a sense of competence will grow within the child. The task must meet the optimal challenge which means that one does not need to be the best or get an "A", but need only to take on a meaningful personal challenge and give it one's best.

**Today's Practical :** Do you let your kids to take up any meaningful personal challenge and expect them to give their best ? Do you think you have given the kids the healthy autonomy to make their choices and preferences in life or do they feel forced to do things in their life ? Couples can discuss this among themselves or check with the kids if you are comfortable to do so.



Day 20

## **Freedom from FEAR & Unhealthy Guilt**

**Galatians 5:1, Acts 15:10, Romans 8:15**

These verses relate to freedom we have in Christ. Freedom can be defined in several ways for different individuals. Some people are in bondage to fear, to sin, to other people, to circumstance. Through Christ we are assured God delivers, rescues, frees, and releases his children from all kinds of chains: be they physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual. When the children are provided with healthy autonomy, they will grow with the healthy understanding of God's love and grace that they will not feel condemned or live in unhealthy fear and guilt. Jesus came to break us free from the slavery of fear and guilt that the world and the Devil puts on our children. In some instances, parents can adopt the style of putting excessive fear in the minds of children to control them. If the core emotional need of Healthy autonomy is not met, they grow developing beliefs that bad things are about to happen around the corner, I am powerless to do anything, I will be rejected by anger or abandonment.

Some times we parents can be manipulative and twisted in our behaviour and make the children to feel guilty (even though children's choices are healthy) if they do not fit our agenda of society status, ego and endless family needs benefits and comforts. Such behaviour of parents can cause unhealthy guilt in the mind of kids and the child will develop negative beliefs that he or she is the victim.

**Today's Practical :** Ask the children if they have any fears in their mind and allay those fears sharing the above scriptures of freedom that Jesus gives from fear. Make a decision not to put unhealthy guilt in the minds of children to fulfill your own unhealthy parental expectation.



## **Building up Children's Competency and Performance**

### **2 Timothy 2:15, Proverbs 22:6**

Meeting this need of healthy autonomy and Performance is all about building the competency of our children. Here these verses talk about providing adequate training to our kids for that effect. For the parents to spend time on training means we should hold back from ourselves doing things for the kids but make our kids try doing their own things again and again. Some of us do not have time or mind set or patience to train. we better finish the task quickly by ourselves and move on. This takes away the opportunity for the kid to learn. Some of us do not care to get involved into our kids life to that level and provide training. This requires some discipline on our part and changing our schedule for the kids sake. We all know that practice makes things perfect... or at least improves things.

There is a saying that goes like this:-

Teach me ....I will forget ( 5% retention)  
Show me.....I may remember (15% retention)  
Make me do..I will learn (80% retention)

the research has proven experiential learning is best way for human learning. All the abilities, talents and the character you would like to build on the kids make them practice... this is much easier if you also do it along with the kid like gym trainer. These activities gets into the sub conscious mind and then the kids do it effortlessly.

**Today's Practical :** How much have taken upon yourself the role of being a trainer for your own children ? Today you **DO IT ALONG** with your kid ( like a trainer you are on the field giving them the experience of doing things.) whatever you want the kid to do...may be Prayer, bible study, evangelism, go out and help a poor, play on the park, do the school project or home work etc.



## **The Core Emotional Need of Reasonable Limits**

### **Proverbs 1:8, Proverbs 23:15-19**

In the book of proverbs, Solomon wrote extensively concerning the love and discipline of children. He addresses his instructions to “My Son” for 26 times in the book of Proverbs. The son is expected to hear the instruction of his father and not to disobey the law of the mother. The instruction here is for the children to be wise and reasonable in making the choices and decisions. 1 Kings 1:5-6, Primarily, David’s lack of involvement to set boundaries and limits is seen in his refusal to discipline his son Adonijah. Scripture declares that David “had not rebuked him at any time”. In other words, David was totally uninvolved in the discipline of his son. David is one of the example of parenting styles with out limits and boundaries. David was a military man who was away from his children and served as the King of Israel for much of his life, but this alone was not the cause for his children’s behaviour. David had a minimum of six wives and at least nineteen sons. Most likely David also had many daughters as well, though only Tamar is mentioned in Scripture. **2 Sam. 14:28**, In addition, David refused to deal with Absalom for killing his brother Amnon after the rape of his sister Tamar. David also failed to allow God’s law and Israel’s justice system to deal righteously with Amnon’s action, or Absalom’s murder of Amnon. Even after David allowed Absalom to return to Jerusalem, he neglected to meet with him to resolve the issues David was an uninvolved parent. The result is his children grow up with out the guidance and expectation to live with in the limits and boundaries.

The core emotional need of reasonable limits can be defined as giving our children a sense of right and wrong, a sense of boundaries, the tools they need to get along in the world and how to work well with others. Limits and Boundaries provide markers and guides so that children know what is acceptable and what is not. Here parents should have conviction about their personal values and have their own boundaries and limits which should...



...reflect their beliefs consistently. Like with other core emotional needs, neither too many limits nor too few but just the right - Good Enough. Meeting this core emotional need by teaching our children limits and expecting them to live with boundaries is a very loving thing to do as a parent. As parents we shouldn't feel guilty about giving boundaries to our children. In fact we should feel guilty if we are not teaching them limits. Otherwise the kids grow up to be entitled or narcissistic. Parents who practise CPR, Consistent, Predictable and Reliable are more likely to produce children with good mental health. Limits help kids to see that, they are not the centers of universe and they must respect others if they expect to be respected. So limits are ways of teaching children how to practise the Golden rule - Do to others what you would have them do for you.

**Today's Practical :** Working together with your spouse, have a clear and well defined Reasonable limits and boundaries for your children and have a family devo today to communicate that boundaries to your kids. Example ;- Kids can Disagree but Disrespect towards parents not allowed. Making mistake tolerable but hiding mistake not tolerated. Dialogue and Delay to obey will be put up with but Disobedience will not be put up.

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Day 23

### **Setting Reasonable Limits promotes Self Discipline**

**Proverbs 25:28**, Self Control builds you up with out that not only is even a city will get destroyed.

**1 Corinthians 9:24-27**, The key differentiator between succes and failure in sports or school or life is Exercising Self Control over all things.

**2 Timothy 1:7**, Spirit of Self Control is a gift God gives us to live a victorious life and not to give into fear.

**Titus 2:12**, We are called to get trained to live a life of self control when we seek to live a godly life. When this need of reasonable limit is met children are able to be self controlled and self disciplined at least to an extent. Though it doesn't come naturally for most children, they will eventually be able to be grateful for the ability to limit themselves. They will have thoughts like, "It is good to enjoy life but it is often necessary to do the hard things first and to deny myself when i feel like giving in to potentially harmful emotions or desires. It is fair for me to get my way in relationships some of the time but not necessarily all of the time. I feel a sense of satisfaction when I achieve goals I have set for myself."

Children with this kind of thinking and inner motivation and discipline will be ahead of others in life - learning to delay gratification at an early age has proven to be an indicator of future success. A persuavise study found that children with self discipline were not only to have developed addiction or committed a crime by adulthood, but were also healthier and wealthier than their more impulsive peers. Many parents push their children to learn more and cram more clases to have high IQ. More than IQ it is Self discipline that has a bigger effect on academic performance. However as parents whom do we blame when their children underachieve ? We blame the schools and teachers and tutions and large size class. While these are important factors perhaps we parents need to look closer to home - As parents We have Failed to teach our kids to make choices that help them to sacrifice short term pleasure for long term gains and to pay attention to rules and remember instructions.



It is doubtful any kid is born with these traits. Hopefully parents can model and teach about the value of doing the hard things first, of dealing with anger in a healthy way, of managing time and money well, of treating their body with respect and of keeping their word. If as parents we can manage all that, we would have given our kids a huge gift.

**Today’s Practical :**

Give one chocolate to your children and tell them they are free to eat. But let them know they will get one more if they keep it without eating for 2 hours. Bring up to your child the areas in their life you feel they are impulsive and dive into immediate gratification. Explain to them the benefits of long term gain in those areas if they learn to sacrifice short term kick.

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**Setting Reasonable Limits promotes Self Respect and  
Respect for others**

**Genesis 1:27,** We are created in the image of God. We reflect God's image through us. There is nothing that we need to be ashamed of about us.

**Jeremiah 1:5,** God knew our children before we knew them. Our children belong more to God than to us.

**Psalms 139:13-14,** You and me are specially made out of and by the spirit of God. God's hands have knitted us together in our mother's womb.

**SELF ESTEEM / RESPECT :** When this need of reasonable limit is met, they will be secure enough to seek out relationships in which there is mutuality rather than being enslaved to pleasing others or even subjected to bullying. When we parents are helping children to follow limits, we must ensure that the children are not just giving into approval seeking but genuinely understand that the limits are important. The message in their mind is as follows:-

“ I am confident in my own decisions and do not need to seek the approval of others. If other people do not approve of me, as long as I have acted in good faith, I know I have nothing to worry about.”

**Romans 12:10,** When there is love and affection for others, we will find it easy to respect and honor others.

**Romans 13:7,** The respect and honor that we owe and due for others should be given to others.

**RESPECT FOR OTHERS :** Children who have had this core emotional need of reasonable limits met do not see themselves as better or worse than others but as equals. They know how to treat others fairly.



They also feel, “I am a person of worth and value but I am not better than others. The same rule that applies to others also apply to me. Sometimes it is healthy to put others above myself and it is certainly healthy to feel for others and try to put myself in their shoes. I do not need to control everything and everyone.” Children who have this need met are kind, they feel for others and they respect others boundaries. They do not often purposely say things to hurt others and if they do they feel bad and apologise. They are not pushy and controlling and naturally want to pitch in and do their share of work in projects. They know how to pursue their own happiness and desires without walking all over others.

**Today’s practical :**

Ask your kids to close their eyes and answer this question. Say what you feel deep inside not what you think ? Do you feel you were born to Succeed ? ( give no. between 1 to 10) This will reveal their level of self esteem. If it is low, you need to build them up with positive affirmations. They cannot take challenges. They need lots of encouragement.

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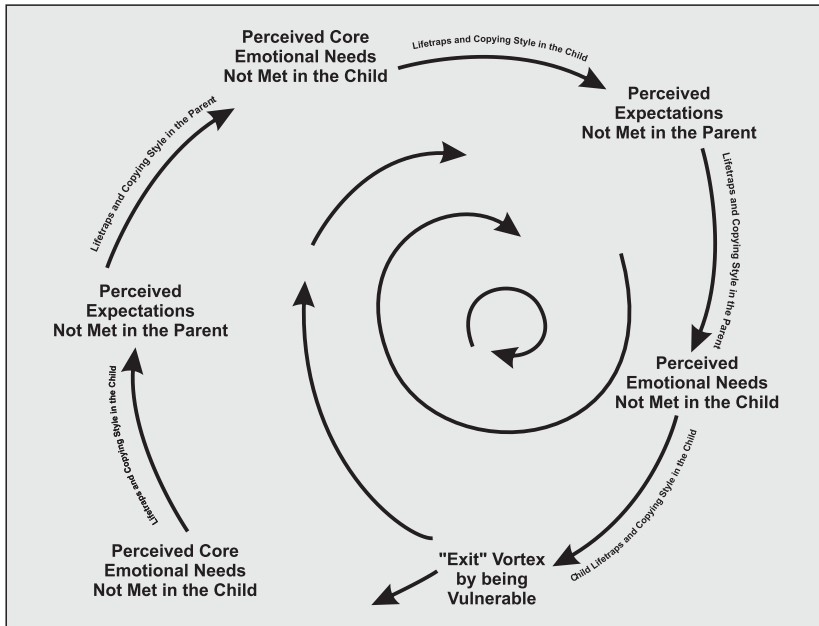
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## The Vortex of Conflict Escalation



**James 4:1,** Conflicts in relationships is directly related to our desires and needs that are not met in relationships.

### **Colossians 3:13, Proverbs 15:1**

When the parents are setting the limits for the children's behaviour, sometimes it may escalate into a conflict. When parents (rightly or wrongly) do not feel that children are meeting their expectations and when the children (rightly or wrongly) do not feel that parents are meeting their core emotional needs, there will be conflict. If the parents are able to practice the principles of Good enough parenting, hopefully the conflicts would be sorted out constructively. However since the emotional part of the brain seems to work quicker than the rational part, this does not always happen.



At that heated environment, the conflict may escalate and become destructive as parent and child enter into what we call “THE Vortex of conflict Escalation”. This vortex can involve the exchange of harsh words, throwing of tantrums, or stonewalls of silence and sulking, but either way, it will harm the connection, mar the feeling of acceptance and damage the relationship. Kindly consider the picture above on this page to understand how when child reacts when his need is not met triggering the parent to react when their expectation is not met. Just as children have their core emotional needs, the parents have their Expectations on their children. These expectations are not the Parents core emotional needs. Parents cannot expect the kids to meet their core emotional needs. Their needs have to be met in the marriage. It is not the Kids responsibility to meet the parents emotional needs. These are normal healthy expectations from the parents on their children. They are :

- 1.Connection
- 2.Growth and performance
- 3.Responsibility and Respect

**When** children make progress in these areas, parents expectation would be fulfilled. Even if the child is not able to make progress, it is the responsibility of the parents to accept and love the children unconditionally. That is the key to Good enough parenting. Many parents may have to check if they have unrealistic expectations and unreasonable limits imposed on their child. This again is experienced by the child as an exasperation interaction. Being aware of this situation and being vulnerable will help the parent to exit the vortex. For more information kindly refer to the **GOOD** Enough Parenting Book.

### **Today's Practical:**

**When** was the last time you got into a vortex of conflict escalation with your child? You can draw your own vortex. Did you get mixed up expecting the child to meet your emotional needs? Discuss with your spouse which of your expectation was not met by the child that triggered you to get sucked into the vortex. Make a decision not to get sucked into the vortex in the future and learn to exit out of it by being vulnerable and not being reactive.



### **The Core Emotional Need of Realistic Expectation**

**Mathew 6:31- 34, Ecclesiastes 12:12b -14, 1 Timothy 6: 2b - 11,**

Human mind has so many expectations. Several of them are to please the society and self but very unrealistic. That puts the individual to stress. Parents can be so carried away by the rat race of the world and fall prey to this. With this mind we can burden the children with our dreams and desires as the expectation on them. The core emotional need of realistic expectation can be defined as helping your children to understand what is expected of them , while giving them the freedom to be themselves. It involves fine tuning expectations so that they inspire and motivate your child. This expectation can not be too high that puts pressure on the child or can not be too low that is uninspiring and conveys a lack of belief in the child's capacity. Some parents may have exaggerated expectations while some may have little or no expectation. We cannot meet the need of realistic expectation without ensuring that the core emotional need of connection and acceptance is also adequately met. In order to meet this need, children need to consistently and on an emotional level hear and believe the following messages from their parents;

“ They have realistic expectations and they know my strengths and weaknesses. They encourage me to do my best, while letting go off the perfectionistic expectations. They help me to achieve balance between work and play. Their love for me is not based on the outcome of my achievements at school. They value my strengths and aspirations even though they may be different from theirs and not as recognised by society. They guide me in taking care of myself and endeavour to ensure that I enjoy life. They truly forgive me when I mess up.”

**Today's Practical :** Kindly ask your child if they feel and believe the above messages. If the answer for most of the messages is negative, then you as a parent need to modify your expectation on your child.



### **Realistic Expectations promote Realistic Standards**

**Mathew 22:36-40**, Jesus narrowed down the Moses list of 10 commandments to just 2. And he concised the entire bible to these verses saying all the other commandments in the bible just hang on these two commandments. In fact in many other verses in the bible Jesus further simplifies to say Loving God is the ultimate. If we love God we will be automatically obeying his commands. Even though God is a perfect God, His standards are realistic ones for mankind to follow. That is the very purpose of Jesus to make God's standard accessible for ordinary man. But the Pharisees and the teachers of Law pushed the standard to unrelenting levels. So many times because of our own mindset on unrelenting standards, we get ourselves burdened with life and burden others.

Children who have had the core emotional need for realistic expectations met have healthy standards. They are able to remind themselves, 'It is good to have high standards, but sometimes, good enough is good enough. I am comfortable doing my best without fear of being criticised. Hard work and efficiency are noble, but not nobler than connecting with people or caring for my health. I believe that there is a time to relax and have fun'. Because of this mind-set, they will be more likely to have good friends and grow up to have healthy families themselves. While they may not appear to have the inner drive that accompanies the unrelenting standards lifetraps, they will certainly be more at peace, and will avoid the accompanying sleepless nights and stomach aches. These children have parents who provide healthy motivation, and who help them to enjoy the process, not just the desired result. It is important to point out that children with healthy standards will enjoy winning as much as anyone else, though they will usually prioritise fairness to others over being "number one".

**Today's Practical :** Focus on your child efforts and not on the results or performance. Reward your child or have a party for your child just to emphasize to the child it is for putting in his or her personal best efforts.



**Realistic Expectations promote Graciousness**

**Ephesians 2: 8-9, 2 corinthians 12:9, Isaiah 64:6**

Our spiritual life runs because of God's grace. We are saved by grace and not by works. Our righteous acts are like filthy rags. We cannot build our identity on our achievement and look down on people for their mistakes. We have to build our children with this biblical foundation that God's grace is our life line and God's grace is sufficient for us. We should teach our children to receive God's grace and to show this grace to others. Children who have had the core emotional need for realistic expectations met have a sense of graciousness. Deep down in their being, they understand this reality: "Everyone makes mistakes; no one is perfect". They also appreciate that "While it is certainly true that we will often reap what we sow, it feels great when others are gracious with me, and therefore, I should extend grace both to myself and others." Children who know how to give grace and act with forgiveness will probably experience less stress as adults and be blessed with many friends! It is thus a wonderful mind-set to inculcate in your children: when your children consider discipline to be training and helping, rather than retribution, they would be less likely to be punitive themselves. Notwithstanding that there is a time for other measures, discipline, training, teaching, and giving lots of grace will go a long way towards helping your child develop a Christ-like outlook on life.

**Today's practical:** Have you been bringing up some of past sins of your child over and over again? Ask your child if they have been feeling like that? Also ask your child if they have a feeling that you have not forgiven them of any of their past sins. ( may the the one you are constantly bringing up )



**Realistic Expectations promote self-sacrifice with boundaries**

**Mathew 22: 39, Ephesian 5:29**

**We** should teach our children to have healthy sense of our self and our needs. The should understand that loving your neighbour as yourself means that you do need to love yourself. You do need to take care of your body. Children who have had the core emotional need for realistic expectations met have a sense of self-sacrifice, though with boundaries. They do not feel guilty for thinking, “I will meet the needs of others without ignoring my own need at same time. It is normal to expect that my needs should also be met, although there will be many times when it is good to serve others without expecting anything in return”. Most children possess an inherent sense of fairness; they know when they are being made to do more than their share of the work around the house. Of course, there are kids who love to serve: in this case, it is important that parents do not take advantage of a serving child and nurture the maladaptive side of this lifetrap, instead of the healthy adaptive side. While selflessness and a sense of service are commendable qualities, they should be nurtured appropriately in children. Hence, parents must help such children set boundaries for service and recognise when they are being exploited. Essentially, a child should be trained to genuinely serve, while knowing how to say “No” when it is in appropriate.

**Today’s Practical:**

Is there one kid in your family being made to serve overly (exploited) perhaps by other kids? Address it. In the name of encouraging and appreciating the serving child we can make the child to develop self sacrificial life trap. All the family members can join and make the most serving child in the family very special today.



**Plus One Core Emotional Need for  
Spiritual Values and Community**

**What** do we know about the core emotional need for spiritual values and community? Both in the Old and New Testament, God commands us to impart spiritual values to our children that encompass every facet of life. This takes being purposeful and committed. When parents are passive, their children's sinful natures are allowed to be controlled by the world and their lives are led by the flesh instead of the Spirit.

**Galatians 5:16-18**, We want our children to live lives that are free, not under law, but in accordance with the Spirit of God. The best way we know to help them get there goes back to the days of Moses. The teachings in the OT that Jewish families literally posted on their doorframes - **Deuteronomy 6:1-9**

In the New Testament, Jesus encapsulated this teaching succinctly, as related in **Mark 12:29-31**, after he was asked about the greatest commandment. The apostle Paul referred back to the Torah when by the Holy Spirit he wrote - **Ephesians 6:1-4**

Raising children up in the Lord is not about getting them to go through a course. As God says in Deuteronomy, meeting this core emotional need has to do with our lives and lifestyle. It may sound cliché, but it is true that values are "caught" more than "taught". God gives us innumerable opportunities during the limited years we have with our children. We must mindfully and intentionally make use of these opportunities as they present themselves in order to mould our children's thinking and impart godly values so that they can be inoculated against the onslaught of the world as early as possible.

When parents are meeting the four core emotional needs, and combine that with meeting the plus one core emotional need for spiritual values and community, the child will develop some or all of the following fruit of the Spirit as listed in **Galatians 5:22-23**.



If children are connected with their parents (if the first core need is met, they will usually very naturally want to imitate the values of their parents. Children who see their parents modelling the fruit of the Spirit as the parents become more and more like Jesus will admire those qualities themselves. Parents sometimes feel that this process is endless but eventually, the kids will get it. If parents are not meeting the other core emotional needs, it will be hard to meet the plus one need.

We put forward seven spiritual values that we feel as parents we need to impart to our children.

- 1. The way our children view god
- 2. The way our children view god's word
- 3. The way our children view themselves
- 4. The way our children view right and wrong
- 5. The way our children view others
- 6. The way our children view conflict in relationships
- 7. The way our children view repentance

kindly refer to the **GOOD ENOUGH PARENTING** book for elaborate discussion on each values.

**Today's Practical :** Have a Bible quiz with the children along with the parents. Ask the children how do they get their spiritual values from the parents. Do these values reach them more **taught** by parents or **caught** through their observation.

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