Parenting Boys and Girls

1. Introduction
   1. Knowledge and wisdom (mom’s garden)
   2. Scope of our talk today
   3. **Proverbs 14:1**  
      “The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down”
2. The Art of Nurturing Boys
   1. Recommended Reading
      1. “Wild Things: The Art of Nurturing Boys” – James and Thomas
      2. “Raising Cain” – Kindlon and Thomson
      3. “Dangerous Book for Boys” – Iggulden
      4. “The Way of the Wild Heart: A Map for the Masculine Journey” – Eldridge
      5. “The Good Son” “The Wonder of Boys”

- Gurian

1. Developmental Stages
   1. Boys aged 2-4 “Explorers”
      1. Active
      2. Curious
      3. Aggressive (i.e. wrestling)

“"Why are some young boys more aggressive than girls? We don't know for sure. We think that boys are predisposed to higher activity levels as a result of androgens (male hormones) in utero. However, it is not, as many people believe, a result of testosterone in the blood, because before puberty, boys and girls have the same level. What we know is that boys in all cultures around the world wrestle more, mock fight more, and are drawn to themes of power and domination, but that's not the same as hurting someone, so it's not necessarily a cause for worry." *Raising Cain* Michael Thompson, Phd.

* + 1. Physical and Spatial – Aptitude for Physics, Gross motor skills, Curiosity about how things work
  1. What “Explorers” Need
     1. Space
     2. Structure (i.e. Tuck-in time – praying, singing same song)
     3. Consistent Boundaries/Rules (i.e. “Enough”, no hitting)
     4. Praise
     5. Ways to foster imagination
  2. Boys aged 5-8 “School-aged Children”
     1. Compassion
     2. Black-and-white about rules
     3. Competitive + Chivalrous

“In school-age children, the difference between the sexes is most evident on the playground. For boys, play often centers around winning. Boys tend to play in large groups with structured games that keep score. They thrive on competition and one-upsmanship as each strives to be the leader of the pack.” Similarities And Differences Between The Sexes

By Ashleigh Frank Published March 17, 2008

* + 1. Some struggles in school
       1. “Boys and Girls Learn Differently: A Guide for Parents and Teachers” – Gurian
       2. “The Minds of Boys: Saving Our Sons from Falling Behind in School and Life” – Gurian + Stevens
       3. “Boys Adrift” -Sax
  1. What “School-aged Children” need
     1. Danger (i.e. Camping, a “Break the Rules” night, an older movie)
     2. Love Relationship (Quality time, spiritual times, questions/sharing)
     3. Support, Routine and Praise Regarding School
     4. Independent play (vs. entitlement, dependence)
  2. Boys aged 9-12 “Tweens”
     1. Evolving
     2. Criticizing (esp. mothers)

“Remember what we said earlier about mom being the safest place on earth for a boy? Unfortunately, this safety has a downside. It’s called the “Rubber band Phenomenon.” Because a boy feels so safe with his mom, he instinctively believes she will never abandon him – no matter what he says or does. Therefore, he starts to believe that he can push against his mom emotionally and stretch her out as far as he wants, because she will always bounce right back to being that same place of safety. He will be his most tender and his most punishing with her. (As we said before, a mom gets her son’s best and worst – and it’s during this season of life that she’s most likely to get the worst of who he is.) Often, the worse a boy feels about himself, or the more complicated things get in terms of his other relationships, the more his mom will become the target of his wrath. How’s that for fair? And if that’s not bad enough, it’s during this stage that she’ll have to start letting him go. Ouch!” – *The Art of Nurturing Boys* Stephen James and David Thomas p. 241

* + 1. Self-conscious/vain
    2. Friendly
    3. Love traditions
  1. What “Tweens” need
     1. Information
     2. Creative outlets
     3. Be more laid-back, but still involved and supervising – Our parenting job is not over yet
     4. Spiritual mentoring in a deeper way
     5. Independent Functionality in areas of basic living – i.e. hygiene, cleaning house, homework, etc..
  2. Boys aged 13-17 “Teens”
     1. Chaos – physiologically and emotionally
     2. Arrogance/Argumentative
     3. Finding Individuality
     4. Team players
  3. What Teens Need
     1. Other voices (Bible study leaders, teachers, etc.)
     2. Food
     3. Responsibility (Job, freedom to fail, etc.)
     4. Car rides

1. The Art of Nurturing Girls
   1. Recommended Reading
      1. “Mom’s Everything Book for Daughters” - Freeman
      2. “Raising Girls” – Trevathan and Geoff
      3. “Daring Book for Girls”-Buchanan and Peskowitz
      4. “Queen Bees and Wannabes” Wiseman
      5. “5 Conversations you Must Have with Your Daughter” -Courtney
      6. “[Girls Will Be Girls: Raising Confident and Courageous Daughters](http://www.amazon.com/Girls-Will-Confident-Courageous-Daughters/dp/0786886579/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1268762978&sr=1-3)” by Joann Deak
2. Developmental Stages
   1. Girls aged 2-4 “Explorers”
      1. Typically vocal and relational/ compassionate

“At four years of age, girls seem to be better at interpreting emotions and building relationships, while boys have a better understanding of spatial relationships. There are also notable differences between boys and girls when it comes to language. Research shows that girls tend to develop their verbal skills faster than boys. While girls use words almost exclusively, young boys tend to use words about 60 percent of the time, and substitute noises and sounds the rest of the time (such as machine-gun fire, car-engine sounds and animal growls).” -*Parenting Boys Vs. Girls: How Different Is It?* -Ashleigh Frank

* + 1. Relatively obedient about rules
    2. Interested in animals, art + crafts
    3. Can be fearful and dependant
  1. What “Explorers” Need
     1. Outlets for imagination/creativity
     2. Physical affection
     3. Something to nurture
     4. Relational tuck in time with prayer and singing
     5. Eye contact
     6. Let them struggle with an issue for a short time before immediately coming in with help
  2. Girls aged 5-8 “School-Aged Children”
     1. Relational games, group dynamics
     2. Drama, the down-side of being relational

“In school-age children, the difference between the sexes is most evident on the playground. For boys, play often centers around winning. Boys tend to play in large groups with structured games that keep score. They thrive on competition and one-upsmanship as each strives to be the leader of the pack. Girls, however, tend to play in small groups of two to four. They often engage in intimate conversations, listening intently to each other and maintaining eye contact. Their play often centers around building and discussing relationships. Traditionally “female” games, such as jump rope and hopscotch, emphasize group support and sharing (everyone gets a turn). Some studies show that teenage girls perceive more “stressors” in life than teenage boys, especially when it comes to interpersonal relationships (with family, friends and romantic interests). These studies also show that teenage girls react more strongly to these stressors, and are more likely to experience depression. For example, if a teenage boyfriend and girlfriend have a fight, the girl is more likely to obsess over it, while the boy is more likely to distract himself with an activity.” - *Girls Will Be Girls: Raising Confident and Courageous* Daughters by Joann Deak

* + 1. Soliloquy
    2. Struggles with fear
    3. Nurturing
    4. Typically good students
  1. What “School-Aged Children” Need
     1. Freedom to be adventurous
     2. An outlet for talking
     3. Spiritual advice about relational issues
     4. Training about values like honesty (vs. lying, manipulating)
     5. Independent play
  2. Girls Aged 9-12 “Tweens”
     1. Narcissism (Body image, Rumors, Rivalry, Fads)
     2. Physical Development
     3. Ambivalence and Independence (“Whatever”)
     4. Femininity
     5. Loss of interest in Science and Math
  3. What “Tweens” Need
     1. Body talks (Development and Body image)
     2. Conflict-Resolution

“She will argue with you, be disappointed, cause conflict. But working through (notice we didn’t say ignoring) these conflicts gives her a tool that will be invaluable to her as she grows older. She will learn to handle her anger and deal with disappointments, and she will learn to forgive and offer grace.” – *All You Need to Know About Raising Girls* by: Melissa Trevathan and Sissy Goff

* + 1. Spiritual Mentoring in a Deeper Way
    2. Initiation
    3. A Safe Harbor

“In the fear of the Lord one has a strong confidence, and his children will have a refuge.” –Prov. 14:26

* 1. Girls Aged 13-17 “Teens”
     1. Compassion reemerges after the narcissistic years
     2. Independence
     3. Desire for admiration and belonging
     4. Idealistic, often with an intense passion for relationships
  2. What “Teens” need
     1. Conversations more so than instruction
     2. Good friends ad mentors
     3. A sense of conviction about the truths she’s learned, but hasn’t seen yet
     4. Responsibility (Job, etc.)

1. Parenting Boys and Girls
   1. A Boy and His Father
      1. Often dads feel it is up to them to “toughen up” a boy. This notion is not misplaced, as many men think back to the teachings of their fathers about what it meant to be tough, to be a man, to live well and wisely. However, a dangerous side-effect to this perceived “role” is that parents (mothers too) can squelch a boy’s emotional development to some degree through the messages that they send to their sons. It’s important to understand the role and place for emotions. This seems to be especially true between a father and son.

“One of the best things parents can do to nurture emotional health in children of both genders is to teach them to talk about their feelings. Boys should not hide, disregard or stifle their vulnerable feelings. Girls have an easier time talking about feelings because they are generally accepted to be more emotional than boys. The truth is there is not a gender difference in terms of emotional vulnerability. Everyone has feelings, and it's healthy to talk about them and deal with them appropriately. Boys who are encouraged to show their nurturing and loving emotions will grow up to be loving fathers and do well in relationships with women. Girls who are encouraged to be assertive and self confident will have a greater chance for success in life.” - *Raising Boys vs. Raising Girls* By: Alice Langholt

“Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.” – Col. 3:21

“Discipline your son, for there is hope, do not set your heart on putting him to death.” –Prov. 19:18

* + 1. Rites of passage Ceremonies
    2. Danger (Breaking “mom-rules” together)
    3. Teach basic skills – how to chop wood, throw a ball, catch a fish. These are often bonging and memorable times.
    4. Be a good example of working hard and also maintaining relational contact with others.

“Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness…Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.” Titus 2:2, 6-8

* + 1. Passing on the facts of life – The wisdom of God (i.e. The Proverbs)

“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.” – Prov. 22:6

“The father makes known to the children Your faithfulness.” –Isa. 38:19b

* 1. A Boy and His Mother
     1. A mother will see her son’s best and worst. “Rubber-band Effect” Just be sure to discipline him for his sake, and not out of pure personal hurt.

“The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother…Discipline your son, and he will give you rest; he will give delight to your heart.” –Prov. 29:15,17

* + 1. “Mama’s Boy”? Don’t let fear of this make you withdraw love from your son, however – there are mothers who do an injustice to their sons by being too close (emotional insect) or too overbearing (mother hen). We need to entrust others to be significant and necessary in our son’s life – it isn’t supposed to be just one person who has all the answers and the break-throughs and emotional bonding moments. We need to let go of that death grip. And encourage our sons to be involved with many people.
    2. Do not display a negative view of men to your son
    3. Feed his friends – and be generous and hospitable to all sorts of people.

“I have been young, now I am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread. He is ever lending generously, and his children become a blessing.” –Ps. 37:25-26

* + 1. Let your husband and son work out their issues without nosing in too much. Think of ways to be helpful without interfering with what might be an important thing that has nothing to do with you.
    2. Instruct him – your teaching will have a different impact than your husband’s teaching. Both are important.

“My son, keep your father’s commandment, and forsake not your mother’s teaching.” –Prov. 6:20

* 1. A Girl and Her Father
     1. Studies have shown over and over again that a girl who has a healthy relationship with her father will be less likely to become promiscuous at a young age. So fatherly involvement and affection is very important.
     2. Help her keep in touch with her “masculine side” – interest in science, math, rational argument, achievement and competition.
     3. Help her to love her mother, don’t pit them against each other. But find ways to strengthen the relationship between your daughter and your wife.

“Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways! You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table.” – Ps. 128:2-3

* + 1. Have a ritual/tradition – like a weekly breakfast or dinner.
    2. Teach her about God and the Bible. Make her see what’s interesting about this type of learning.

“I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from our children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and His might, and the wonders He has done.” –Ps. 78:2-4

* 1. A Girl and Her Mother
     1. Treat her as you would a young friend from time to time. Do things together you would want to do with a girlfriend.
     2. Teach her life skills – esp. at a young age. Pass down recipes, jump rope songs, crafts, any area of expertise. These can be bonding and memorable moments.
     3. Don’t let her go unchallenged if she’s hating boys or mean girls or siblings, rather be an instrument for teaching God’s grace and love. Instruct her in the importance of forgiveness and doing the hard things which are right to do.
     4. Be a good example of a hard-working woman with good relationships and a graceful spirit.

“Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to too much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, hardworking at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the Word of God may not be reviled.” Titus 2:3-5

* + 1. Let her pick where you go and what you do together sometimes. Don’t be too much of a control-freak – just relax and enjoy her!

1. Conclusion – Fear the Lord and find the wisdom and strength that comes with that faith

“I [the Lord] will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for their own good and the good of their children.” –Jer. 32:39

“Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that you have seen and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children’s children.” – Deut. 4:9

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight. Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.” –Prov.3:5-8