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The Five Pillars of Parenthood ~ Part 5

The last, and final, pillar is the one that will take you your whole life to accomplish.

Pillar #5 ~ Teach your children to live grace-filled lives. The way that this is best accomplished is found in the Word of God. "He must increase, but I must decrease." ~ John 3:30

We live in a culture that teaches us to esteem ourselves. We even call it "self-esteem." However, the Word continually tells us that we are to esteem Christ, not us. One way we esteem ourselves is to take credit for the gifts that God has given us. If we are smart or athletic or beautiful, we are quick to take the credit for those attributes. However, we have nothing to do with being smart or athletic or beautiful or artistic or musical. Those are gifts from God. And the Word tells us, the "Lord gives and the Lord takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord." ~ Job 1:21. When, as a parent, you emphasize the gifts that God has given your child (which they had no control over), to the exclusion of your child's character (which they do have control over), you are setting your child up for failure. Your child is accountable for developing their God-given gifts and using them for His glory ~ but what should be encouraged is the character and grace that it takes to be all that the Lord would have them to be. Give the glory to God for the gifts and emphasize in your child the character that is required to develop those gifts. It is a small nuisance, but a vitally important one. For if the gift is ever taken away, the character that it took to develop the gift will remain. If a child has a right understanding of who they are in Christ, they will have the grace to live a life pleasing to God.

I knew a young man, an exceptional football player, who was in a devastating car accident during his senior year of high school. Of the four people involved in the accident, he was the only one injured. He lost his leg. When told by his friends how unfair it was that this should have happened to him, his response was: "Why *not* me?" He understood how to live a grace-filled life. Children need to understand:

Grace is the unmerited and unconditional love of God toward us.

Grace is free to us, but costly to God.

The cross is God's greatest act of grace.

Salvation is a free gift from God.

Grace must be received, through faith.

Grace produces gratitude toward God, and love toward others.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith ~ and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God ~ not by works, so that no one can boast." ~ Ephesians 2:8-10

Truth to take away: It Is Not About You. It is About God.

Some thoughts and phrases taken from Pastor Chip Ingram's teaching, "How to Raise Positive Kids in a Negative World."