

SUNDAY ARTICLE

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Ten Proposed Commandments for Christian Parenting

Jason Helopoulos

Parenting is one of the most precious joys and responsibilities in this life. Few things produce more humility or furnish greater rewards. Though I feel inadequate for the task, I love being a Daddy. (I hope they never get too “grown-up” to stop calling me “Daddy”!)

I continue to receive “on the job training,” but here are a few commandments I long to live by as I continue to labour in this wonderful vineyard called Christian parenting. Maybe you would have some of your own to add as well.

Worship occupies a central place in our Christian parenting.

1. Thou shall not worship thy children or their future.

We live for the glory of God and seek to parent in light of our highest calling. As much as we love our children, we do not live for them. We fail them profoundly if we do.

2. Thou shall not expect or portray thyself as a perfect Christian family.

We and our children are sinners in need of grace. We do not expect perfection from ourselves, we dare not expect it from our children.

3. Thou shall not exchange the Christian faith for mere moralism in thy children.

We desire our children to live moral lives, but not by a bare morality. We labour and pray to see their lives reflecting a heart renewed by the love of Christ – a lively faith, not dead works.

4. Thou shall not be impatient with thy sons and daughters (or even their teenage friends).

We want to show the same long-suffering and patience to our children that the Lord graciously extends to us (as much as we can). Irritation, anger, and a quick temper crouch at our door and we endeavour to keep them at bay.

5. Thou shall lead thy children in regular family worship and journey to the house of the Lord weekly.

We are *Christian* parents and worship is the heartbeat of the Christian. Thus, worship occupies a central place in our Christian parenting. Day in and day out, week in and week out, month in and month out, year in and year out, we aspire to place our children in the way of the means of grace (Word, sacraments, and prayer) and involve them in the greatest of all earthly (and heavenly) pleasures: worshiping the Triune God of the universe.

6. Thou shall enjoy thy children and be demonstrative in showing affectionate love to them.

We desire that our children always know the treasure they are to us and that they are at rest in the assurance of our love. They are a gift from above (James 1:17) and we rejoice in thanksgiving for them.

7. Thou shall nurture thy marriage for the good of thy children.

(For those parents who are married) We know our marriage serves as the cornerstone of our Christian family. We dare not see it askew, failing, or lacking vitality, for its health or sickness will be reflected in our parenting.

8. Thou shall seek the Lord with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength, knowing it is the foundation of Christian parenting.

We recognize that Christian parenting cannot be separated from our life in Christ. The overflow of a filled cup benefits what is below.

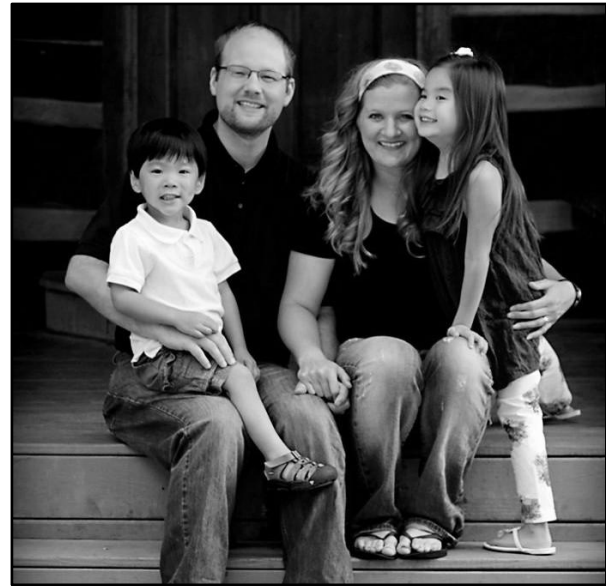
9. Thou shall not depend upon thy own strength, but that of Christ in parenting.

We believe that apart from Christ we can do nothing (John 15). We desire to sow seeds bearing eternal fruit and so must rely upon the Eternal Gardner.

10. Thou shall ultimately entrust thy children to the care of thy Heavenly Father.

We love our children and desire their good, but have not the power to secure it. But we know One who does and He is our Father, who loves us and desires our good. And we can trust Him; He

knows how to give good gifts to His children (Matthew 7).



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Wisdom for families from the author of the Narnia Series:

On this day (8 November) in 1952, C S Lewis wrote in a letter:

“When I have learnt to love God better than my earthly dearest, I shall love my earthly dearest better than I do now. In so far as I learn to love my earthly dearest at the expense of God and instead of God, I shall be moving towards the state in which I shall not love my earthly dearest at all. When first things are put first, second things are not suppressed but increased.”