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A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church

**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

## Questions for Reflection & Discussion

- 1 Read Luke 2:52. Jesus "grew *in wisdom*"—what does that suggest to you? What does it suggest to you that he grew *in stature*? ...*in favor with God*? ...*in favor with men*?
- 2 Which of those are most surprising to you? Are any of them confusing? Why do you think that?
- 3 Excluding stature (which mostly takes care of itself), in which of those areas have you seen significant growth? Tell us about it. How did it happen? What role did you play? What role did others play?
- Review Pastor Doug's list of **Ten Vital Life Lessons from Proverbs** in today's sermon summary.
- 4 In which of those do you think that you've made significant progress?  
In which **one** of those would you **most** like to see you and your children grow?
- Pastor Doug has been challenging us to train our children to be dependent upon God, and **inter**dependent with others. He also has said that "we cannot impart what we do not possess."
- 5 How well/much do you **actually** depend on God for wisdom and love when relating to your spouse? Describe a way in which someone else has helped you in this, or you've helped them. **Be concrete!**
- 6 How well/much do you **actually** depend on God when performing your work responsibilities? Describe a way in which someone else has helped you in this, or you've helped them. **Be concrete!**
- 7 How well/much do you **actually** depend on God for wisdom, grace and skill in parenting situations? Describe a way in which someone else has helped you in this, or you've helped them. **Be concrete!**

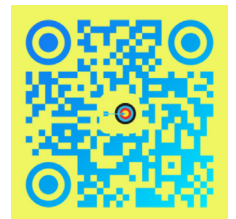
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## Application-Challenge

- 8 Develop a parenting plan for **each** of your children.

- 1 This starter question cues your group up for a substantive discussion of helping our kids develop. Depth will be added to your discussion if you look up “wisdom” and “favor” at [webstersdictionary1828.com](http://webstersdictionary1828.com).
- 2 **Now** we begin getting beyond mere content, to the level of personal interaction and application. You may need to “prime the pump”, so be prepared with your own answer to this question. (But wait for others to think and answer. Check your watch—20 seconds feels like an eternity!)
- 3 Be sensitive to the fact that, for a child with developmental difficulties, growth in stature is **not** automatic. If this is true for anyone in your group, be ready to respond to hurting parents. Other than that, just guide this discussion.
- 4 These “Ten Vital Life Lessons” are found in paragraph two of the Sermon Summary. This discussion ought to flow fairly easily (probably no need to “prime the pump”), but keep attentive as you gain insights into your group members. This is good fodder for individual mentoring opportunities.
- 5 **Now** the vulnerability and synthetic thinking needs to be “full speed ahead”! Think through your own answers, and be ready to prime the pump with just a bit of your answer, not the full answer. Model vulnerability and humility. Lead your group to give concrete, not vague, answers.
- 6 **Ditto.** These are not easy, quick answers. And perhaps not everyone in your group can—or will be willing to—grapple with some of this stuff. Feel free to dig into the answers which any of your group members supply. Others can learn vicariously as someone else grapples to grow in these areas.
- 7 You likely will need to “prime the pump”, so be prepared with your own answer to this question. (But wait for others to think and answer. Check your watch—20 seconds feels like an eternity!)
- 8 As Jesus said in John 13:17: **“If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.”** Discuss Pastor Doug’s challenge for all of us to create a personalized plan for each of our kids. The goal of our instruction is application and life-change (1 Timothy 1:5).

Folks can download and print  
Pastor Doug’s “Parenting Arrow”...



## Sermon Summary

Since the goal of parenting is for our children to become more and more like Christ, Jesus' growth and development serves as an excellent paradigm for our growth and development. Luke's gospel (v. 2:52) tells that the boy Jesus grew and matured in four distinct areas: [1] wisdom (ie, intellectually), [2] stature (physically), [3] favor with God (spiritually), and [4] favor with men (socially). Using Jesus' growth and development as our guide, let's consider how this impacts our parenting. Parents have a responsibility to help their children grow in wisdom. In the Scriptures, wisdom is "the ability to judge correctly and to make choices consistent with Biblical truth." True wisdom comes from God (Proverbs 2: 6-7). That is why religious instruction is so important in the home. And when it comes to imparting wisdom to your children, the book of Proverbs should be your go-to guide. This book was written to instruct children in the art of wise living.

The book of Proverbs outlines **ten vital life lessons** you should teach your children: [1] to revere God (Prov. 1:7), [2] to guard their minds (Prov. 23:7), [3] to obey their parents (Prov. 1:8), [4] to choose their friends carefully (Prov. 13:20), [5] to watch their words (Prov. 18:21), [6] to control their lusts (Prov. 7), [7] to pursue their work (Prov. 6:6-11), [8] to manage their money (Prov. 3:9-10; 22:7), [9] to love their neighbors (Prov. 3:27-29), and [10] to trust God's sovereignty (Prov. 3:5-6).

Parents also have a responsibility to help their children mature physically. We need to stress basic things like proper nutrition and wise food choices. They need to be good stewards of their bodies. Parents should encourage proper exercise. The cell phone, television, and computer are your greatest enemies. I suggest that you put limits on how much time they spend in front of a screen each day. Send them outside to get some exercise and fresh air. The cell phone stays inside! We must ensure they get plenty of sleep. Mom and dad need to be on the same page here. Your kids will do much better on a good night's sleep. They are more alert, and a lot less cranky! Parents need to insist on good hygiene. Regular showers, brushing their teeth, combing their hair, washing their hands, using antiperspirant. Basic stuff, but they learn it at home if they learn it at all. Oftentimes when you see adults with poor hygiene, guess what—it wasn't taught in their home.

Ok, we need to help our children develop intellectually and physically, and we also have a responsibility to help them develop spiritually. Your child's greatest need is for spiritual regeneration. To use Jesus' words, they need to be born again. And that new birth takes place when your child places his or her trust in Jesus Christ as his sin bearer. They cannot begin to grow spiritually until spiritual life has been implanted into their hearts. Parents, from a very young age we need to begin conveying to our children the basic truths of the gospel. But spiritual conversion is just the beginning. Once our children come to faith in Christ, the process of Christian discipleship begins. An important part of that process involves modeling various spiritual disciplines, such as Bible study, prayer, Scripture memory, fellowship, and stewardship. If you don't have these disciplines in place in your life, it is unlikely your children will adopt them. Remember, it is important that we practice what we preach.

That brings us to a fourth area in which we need to help our children develop: Parents have a responsibility to help their children adjust socially. Jesus grew in favor with men. I don't think it is a stretch to assume that Jesus' parents taught him social graces appropriate to his culture. We need to do the same. If our children don't learn these things in the home, where else will they learn them? The idea is to communicate proper respect. One social skill we need to teach involves good manners. This includes social etiquette, social skills, how to make small talk, and how to dress appropriately for the occasion.

As you can see, we have our work cut out for us as parents. We cannot be successful as parents if we are not intentional in our parenting. We must have a plan. What is yours?

*In preparation for completing a "Strategic Parenting Plan" for each of your children, carefully study and consider the following biblical principles.*

**Monday**—Do you and your children *really believe* that God has promised to care for you in every situation?

- Psalm 23:1-6 and 37:5
- Proverbs 3:25-26
- Matthew 10:28-31
- Romans 8:36-39
- 1 Corinthians 10:13

**Tuesday**— Do you and your children *really believe* that your goal must be to please and honor God in every situation?

- Matthew 22:37-39
- Luke 9:23-24
- 2 Corinthians 5:15, 9 and 10:5
- Galatians 5:16-17
- Philippians 2:3-4; 4:8
- Colossians 3:2

**Wednesday**— Do you and your children *really believe* that being a recipient of God's forgiveness obligates us to forgive all?

- Matthew 18:21-35
- Ephesians 4:31-32
- Colossians 3:13
- Romans 12

**Thursday**— Do you and your children *really believe* that God's sovereignty means that you must rejoice in every situation?

- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
- Ephesians 5:20
- Romans 5:1-5
- James 1:2-4

**Friday**— Do you and your children *really believe* that loving others demonstrates that you love God?

- 1 John 2:9-11
- 1 John 3:14-16
- 1 John 4:7-11, 20-21

**Saturday**— Do you and your children *really believe* that God can empower you to discipline your minds in every situation?

- Philippians 4:1-9
- Colossians 3:1-17

Questions adapted from John Broger's *Self-Confrontation: A Manual for In-Depth Discipleship*, pages 308-312



Luke 2:25 summarizes Jesus' growth and development in four domains:

"Jesus kept increasing in **wisdom** and **stature** and in **favor with God** and **men**."

Since our goal in parenting is to help our children become like Christ, we also must care about all four of these domains of growth and development: physical, intellectual, social and spiritual. How are you doing as a parent? How much time and energy are you spending each week on your child's...

- **physical** development?
- **social** development?
- **intellectual** development?
- **spiritual** development?

Which one of these domains do you:

- **think about most? least?**
- **spend the most money on? the least?**
- **think is most determinative of success?**

# Strategic Parenting Plan

Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. —Luke 2:52

Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. —Psalm 127:4



*Wisdom*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

*Stature*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Outside Influences: Next 1-2 Years

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Outside Influences: Next Six Months

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Favor with God*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

*Favor with men*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

