

# Raising Children Revelationally

## Jim Critcher

### Introduction

There are many wonderful books available today that address the relational aspect of parenting. Such Christian books focus on the biblical principles that shape such relationships and the need to cultivate and navigate the changes that invariably occur during the parenting journey. These are great tools. Yet God has given believers many other tools, spiritual tools and gifts, to bring their children into the fullness of their destiny.

### Revelational Parenting

What is often missing on our bookshelves and in our parental “tool kit” is how we raise our children, not just relationally, but *revelationally*. As parents, we are given unique insight into our children not just by natural observation and genetics, but by the Spirit as well. Such a revelational perspective recognizes:

- God is seeing what you may not be seeing in a given moment in the life of a child.
- There are times when we need to see beyond the moment we're in. Seeing what God sees always readjusts and realigns our perspective.
- We need to hear a word about our child that we can stand on, believing God's Word will not return void. Such a word is greater than they are and more effective than our best parenting skills. Remember, God loves your children MORE than you do. The promises of Jeremiah 29 apply to them as well.
- We need more than principles or the latest parenting fad to effectively war on behalf of our children. We war with the words God has spoken about them. More on this later.

Every parent goes through moments wondering “what happened to my child” or “what am I doing wrong as a parent”? We are human. We have

weaknesses and seasons of struggle. But raising our children revelationally gives spiritual perspective that lifts us above those moments when the relationship is under pressure. From that spiritual vantage point we are able to see the promise in our children, not just the problem manifesting itself in the moment.

## Examples from Scripture

Luke 2:19, 33<sup>1</sup>

*<sup>19</sup> Mary cherished these things and pondered them in her heart ... <sup>33</sup> And his father and mother marveled at what was said about him.*

Mary and Joseph's carefully considered the words spoken prophetically over Jesus and held on to them. They would need these words to be effective as parents and to comfort them years later.

Genesis 37:5–11

*<sup>5</sup> Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. <sup>6</sup> He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: <sup>7</sup> We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it."*

*<sup>8</sup> His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.*

*<sup>9</sup> Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."*

*<sup>10</sup> When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" <sup>11</sup> His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.*

Imagine many years later, when Joseph had become their savior, delivering them from famine, how these dreams would be recalled by his family.

---

<sup>1</sup> All Scripture passages are from NIV 1984 edition unless otherwise noted

And then there are those moments when we MISS what is hidden in our children, their calling as a future king perhaps. The external ministry of the prophetic is often needed to call forth that which we sometimes don't see.

1 Samuel 16:6–13

<sup>6</sup> When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord." <sup>7</sup> But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

<sup>8</sup> Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The Lord has not chosen this one either." <sup>9</sup> Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, "Nor has the Lord chosen this one." <sup>10</sup> Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The Lord has not chosen these." <sup>11</sup>

So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep."

Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives."

<sup>12</sup> So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features.

Then the Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; he is the one."

<sup>13</sup> So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah.

Similarly, Eli the High Priest, could have missed seeing what was in the child Samuel except for the persistence of God. The very prophet who would later anoint David as king was almost humanly overlooked himself as God called Him.

1 Samuel 3:1-9,3:19-4:1

<sup>1</sup> The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions.

<sup>2</sup> One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. <sup>3</sup> The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. <sup>4</sup> Then the Lord called Samuel.

Samuel answered, "Here I am." <sup>5</sup> And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he

*went and lay down. <sup>6</sup> Again the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."*

*"My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."*

*<sup>7</sup> Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord: The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.*

*<sup>8</sup> The Lord called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."*

*<sup>19</sup> ...The Lord was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of his words fall to the ground. <sup>20</sup> And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the Lord. <sup>21</sup> The Lord continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word. <sup>4:1</sup> And Samuel's word came to all Israel.*

As believing parents we have unique advantages. One of them is a prophetic vantage point from which to see and call forth that which God has placed in our children. No one else will ever replace this relationship and the stewardship we have been given. We are not only to love our children, but to work with God to bring them into the full measure of who He designed them to be.

### **Creating a revelational environment in your home**

It is possible to create a culture in the home where an awareness of the Spirit is the norm rather than the exception. This can be done by being open in our communication WITH OUR CHILDREN about the things of God. We often underestimate the faith and the capacity latent within our children for sensitivity to the supernatural, a sensitivity not yet jaded by years.

This awareness and openness begins by what they see in us. Do our children see us respond in ways that are primarily spiritual or carnal (natural)? Do they see us actively living in faith, relying on the power and faithfulness of God? What they see us do forms the foundation and the pattern of response in them, both now and later.

- Our children need to see us handle our mistakes properly. That response includes quickly acknowledging guilt and asking for forgiveness from both those who have been offended and from God.

- A place where reality and real Christianity can co-exist. Life isn't perfect. People aren't either. Learning to find God and find grace in a family setting where perfection is not the standard creates an atmosphere necessary for growth.
- As parents, how you deal with your humanity and how that humanity intersects with God will form the basis for how they regard themselves and relate to those around them and to God Himself. This is grace personified.

Another way we encourage a revelational environment in our homes and an acceptance of it in our children is by actively encouraging their imaginations. Sadly, an ever-expanding media laden culture and its constant bombardment of noise and images tends to diminish and even warp the imaginations of our kids. The effect of too much external stimulation is compounded by the fact that what is being placed in their minds is often not in keeping with the things of the Spirit. Developing a Godly imagination is one of the keys to developing the prophetic. To this end:

- Be aware of and vigorously monitor what is being put into your child's imagination. This includes what they see YOU putting into yours.
- Encourage their dreams and their musings. Yes, they are children but their dreams (like Joseph) and imaginative reflection are developing the part of their brain where they can more readily hear from God.
- Tie their imaginations to Scripture. Encourage them to connect their imaginations to God's voice breaking through and speaking to them in dreams and visions. This lays the foundation for the gift and skill of vision and dream interpretation later.

How we approach the spiritual disciplines of prayer and Bible reading also help to set the environment. While these are disciplines, and disciplines are not always fun or convenient, they should be regarded as life-giving and not laws to be carried out. We must carefully set an example in these areas.

## **Crafting a Revelational Worldview**

Developing a “revelational worldview” is part of creating a spiritual environment. As we process the events in the world today, consider them with a view to what the Word of God has to say.

- Cultivate as an important life skill a child’s ability to distinguish between spirits, to discern what is “of God” and what is not. While a spiritual gift of discernment can grow from this - along with God’s written word - this is the opportunity for learning how to discern the difference between good and evil. This can start very early in a child’s life.

Hebrews 5:14

*But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*

- Discussing issues and looking at them scripturally develops a skill for applying the Bible. It can also cultivate an ability to hear the Holy Spirit and make right application of what He has said.

## **Defining**

One of the primary roles of prophecy is that of defining. The process of defining begins best in an environment that recognizes the importance of revelation and blesses and affirms such insight. Here a child can be reminded of what God has said and what He continues to speak over their lives. In this way they are trained and armed to hang on to that which is good.

Jeremiah 1:5

*Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet.*

1 Timothy 1:18–19

*<sup>18</sup> Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, <sup>19</sup> holding on to faith and a good conscience.*

Knowing that which God has placed inherent in a child is not always readily apparent. As parents, we often feel a need to expose our kids to every type of opportunity available to them - from sports to music and everything in between. Yet this diffusion often becomes a wearying process for both parent and child and the very attributes we are trying to instill - focus, creativity (right-brained activity) - are missed or denied.

What if we were to simply ASK GOD what is inside of our children that needs to be defined, developed and celebrated? Imagine the focus that could be brought about at an early stage if the system of trial and error could be eliminated. Doing so would also help our kids dream the dreams that God wants them to have, not just the dreams of grandeur that our narcissistic culture tries to instill. Aligning our children's expectations with God's purpose and design creates in them a clarity of focus and destiny along with a deep sense of security and placement.

### **Different and Fine With Being So**

Raising children in a revelational environment where they learn how to: 1) hear from God; 2) to rightly interpret the times from a spiritual perspective; 3) to resist the latest winds of fad and doctrine is decidedly counter-cultural.

Real thinkers and leaders are always developed outside of the mainstream of thought and culture. For this reason, our children may not always "fit in". Good. We are to be a different, chosen people.

1 Peter 2:9

*<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

One does not have to wait for a lifetime of bad decisions and the bitter fruit that ensues to discover that God's Spirit is always available to impart to us, even from an early age. This is not about raising unloving outcasts. Rather, we are helping our children learn, from an early age, how to live revelationally in their decision making and to live relationally with God. Doing so will set them apart and lay the groundwork for them to bear much Kingdom fruit showing themselves to be true disciples.

## Fighting with the Right Weapons

We are raising different children, children who can be “arrows” if properly aligned and well aimed.

Psalm 127:3–5

*<sup>3</sup> Sons are a heritage from the Lord,  
children a reward from him.*

*<sup>4</sup> Like arrows in the hands of a warrior  
are sons born in one’s youth.*

*<sup>5</sup> Blessed is the man  
whose quiver is full of them.  
They will not be put to shame  
when they contend with their enemies in the gate.*

For this reason alone, there will be moments when every parent will need to wage war on behalf of their child. This war might be for their health, their protection or their decision making and destiny. If the devil is truly fearful of one thing, it is Kingdom progeny. Multiplication of the righteous is the ultimate manifestation of the devil’s defeat.

Effective spiritual warfare is always revelational and Spirit-led.

Ephesians 6:13–18

*<sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup> and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. <sup>18</sup> And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*

Waging war effectively for our families is not just about using the right weapons but using those weapons in the right way and at the right time. An integral part of any effective military campaign is rightly identifying and locating the enemy. For the believer, that involves identifying what is really



at work and the real source of the problem. One reality that is often in play are curses, generational and spoken:

- Curses are generational DNA that, unless broken by the power of the cross, can move from generation to generation (Numbers 14:18) and manifest as sin and bondage. We need to know what those curses are so we can pray to see them broken.
- We must be careful in our reaction and language that we don't generate new curses in our frustration or anger. Blessing and cursing rests with our language.

James 3:9–10

*<sup>9</sup> With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. <sup>10</sup> Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.*

By properly discerning the ROOT (of sin, sickness, etc.) rather than simply addressing the fruit or manifestation, we can bring about lasting change both in and for our children.

## **Moral or Spiritual**

Well meaning Christian parents, because they feel ill-equipped to raise spiritual children, have settled for moral, well-behaved children. The enemy tries to intimidate us as parents that we cannot raise spiritual children so we settle for good morality rather than powerful spirituality. Yes, we are to raise children that have character, but more is needed. We need to go beyond just the fundamental issues of character and morality to instill a deep love for Christ, His Kingdom and REGULAR access to His Spirit to be fully equipped for that to which they are called.

## **Finally**

Parenting revelationally is a skill that is developed intentionally. It doesn't just happen nor is it simply the by-product of being raised in a Christian home. To create such intentionality, three key things must be undertaken:

- An environment must be cultivated where revelation and the work of the Spirit are recognized and given not just a place, but priority.

- Our children need to be defined by revelation – viewed through the lens of the Spirit with a continuing sensitivity to what the Spirit of God has said and is saying.
- We must war for our kids by means of the insight of the Spirit and with the weapons of the Spirit.