



## Godly Parenting | Week #2

*Parenting Seasons & Parenting Success*

**Prep: Read Chapter 2**

### **Group Kick-Off** (start with any or all of these)

#### **Break the Ice:**

- Share a personal parenting highlight from the past week either positive or negative, funny or serious.
- What is one takeaway that you highlighted or that stood out to you in this chapter?

#### **Set the Stage** (Review from Session #1):

The success of godly parenting is more about me than it is about my kids. I am God's agent of change in the hearts and lives of my children. Godly parents raise godly kids.

#### **Key Verse:**

*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it. -Proverbs 22:6*

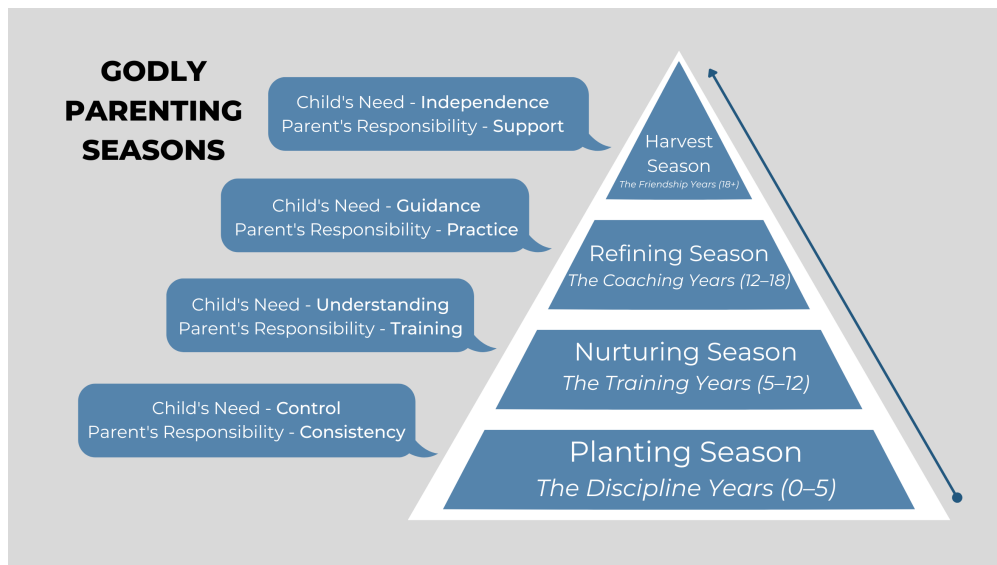
#### **BIG IDEA:**

You have been given four seasons in parenting, and each season builds a proper foundation for the next.

#### **Identifying your goal:**

You may have heard new grandparents say something like this, "If I only knew how much fun grandparenting was, I'd have chosen to do that first!" Of course that's humorous, but only because it's impossible. If you were given the choice between building a house's foundation or its structure first, which would you choose? Well, the choice would be obvious, because the goal is not just a pretty structure in the moment, but a sound and solid one that endures the test of time. Doing the right things in the right order is crucial for longterm success (Matthew 7:24-27). The same principle is true in parenting. Prioritizing the right things in the right seasons will set you up for greater longterm success and less longterm regret.

Discuss observations about the pyramid below and identify which season(s) you are currently going through in your own parenting. (You can access the full image at [GodlyParent.com/resources](http://GodlyParent.com/resources).)



God has given you four seasons of parenting with your children, and the fourth season is the “when he is old” season. That means you have been given three seasons in which you’ll intentionally guide your child “in the way he should go.”

**The first season is primarily *foundational*.** Get the first season right, and it makes the next season easier, and so on. However, get the first seasons wrong, and it makes it more difficult to get the next season right as you’re trying to play catchup from the previous season(s).

- How have you seen this exemplified either positively or negatively in your own life or others?

**The second season is primarily *educational*.** You are preparing your child’s heart and mind for life through a proper understanding of authority, truth, and right and wrong.

**The third season is primarily *practical*.** This is a heavily conversational season where you as a coach are giving and guiding your child through opportunities to live out their training in everyday life.

**The fourth season is primarily *relational*.** This season is when you get to enjoy the fruit of your labor—the harvest.

Discuss the farming analogy on page 210-211. A good farmer does what only he can do to produce a good harvest. But a good farmer also knows that there are many things completely out of his control that he must trust God for.

- What are some things as parents that we CAN do to ensure a good harvest?
- What are some things as parents that we CANNOT do, but must trust God for concerning the harvest?

Proverbs 22:6 does not guarantee that our kids will never stray from the truth. However, we can align ourselves and our parenting with God’s proven laws of sowing and reaping as found in Galatians 6:7&9. Remember that being a godly parent is not a guarantee that you will raise a godly child. However, it is still your best and most biblical option.

Discuss the four seasons of parenting and their corresponding verses:

## **PLANTING SEASON—THE DISCIPLINE YEARS (0-5)**

***(Child's greatest need—control. Parent's greatest responsibility—Consistency)***

*Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child. Proverbs 22:15*

- How can a parents belief that “my kids are naturally good at heart” work against them in their parenting efforts?
- What is the only command ever given in Scripture directly to children? (Eph. 6:1, Col. 3:20)
- Is it okay for parents to force (enforce: root word, force) their children to obey? (Hint: if obedience is the one thing commanded for children, should it not also be the one thing enforced by parents?)
- During this first season of establishing control, should parents argue or reason with children to get them to obey, or simply require obedience? Why or why not?

Discuss how control (the child's primary need) and consistency (the parent's primary responsibility) are both necessary for success in this season.

## **NURTURING SEASON—THE TRAINING YEARS (5-12)**

***(Child's greatest need—Understanding. Parent's greatest responsibility—Training)***

*Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Ephesians 6:4*

- If George Barna is correct and a child's worldview is established by the age of 13 (page 28 in book), how should that shape our priorities as a parent in the nurturing season?

Discuss this quote from page 29 in the book: *“While parents should establish control in the discipline season, where we most often capture or lose a child's heart is in the nurturing season. And the most difficult part of it all is that most parents won't always know until the next two seasons which it is. Often, children can be outwardly compliant while their hearts are very far from their parents and from the truth.”*

- What are some ways that parents can intentionally cultivate the soil of their child's heart in this season to increase their chances at winning their child's heart rather than losing it?
- Nurturing takes time, patience, and priority. What are some things that parents can sacrifice (put on hold) in the first two seasons to give their children greater priority of their time and attention?

## **REFINING SEASON—THE COACHING YEARS (12-18)**

***(Child's greatest need—Guidance. Parent's greatest responsibility—Practice)***

*Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul. Proverbs 29:17*

- Discuss the “letting go of the bike” illustration on page 31. What are some of the similarities or practical ways of allowing your child to learn to “ride on their own” during this season?
- Good coaching requires both training and practice. The nurturing season has been more of the training. The refining season needs to be more of the practice. How can we help our children to not just know truth, but to own it and live it out for themselves?
- The two primary keys that Andrew’s family found for success in this season were questions and conversations, which naturally go hand in hand. Which of these two do you find more difficult and why?

## **HARVEST SEASON – THE FRIENDSHIP YEARS (18+)**

***(Child’s greatest need – Independence. Parent’s greatest responsibility – Support)***

*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6*

Discuss this statement from page 33: *“Be your child’s parent now so you can be your child’s friend forever. If you’ll be your child’s parent and do the hard things in the first three seasons, you’ll get to enjoy the harvest of their friendship for years to come. Many parents miss this or completely misunderstand it, and it costs them in the long run.”*

- You are given just 18 years to parent your child, but a lifetime to be friends if you do things right. In this season, what are some practical ways to primarily focus on protecting your relationship above all else?
- What are some of the consequences of a parent still trying to parent their grown child rather than focusing on supporting and protecting their relationship?

Like in farming, the universal laws of sowing and reaping are proven to work in parenting as well if parents will align themselves with them.

Which “Helpful How-to Heart Hack” on pages 37-38 is the best practical takeaway for you from this chapter?

As time allows, finish by discussing any “Heart of the Matter” questions on page 39.

### **EXTRA NOTES:**

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