

Deconstructing the Christian Family

In this kick-off session of our Network, we'll look at the standard styles of family structure within the evangelical movement that unwittingly undermine our ability to embed a passionate love for Jesus into the people we love the most. We'll look at how this erodes the love and commitment within our marriage, the role we play as spiritual leaders to our children and grandchildren, and how the church often props up these flawed models of Christian parenting.

Tim Kimmel is the founder and Executive Director of Family Matters, whose goal is to see families transformed by God's grace into instruments of reformation and restoration. Tim develops resources for families and churches and conducts conferences throughout the world on the unique challenges facing today's families. He has authored many books, including: *Grace Based Parenting*, *Raising Kids for True Greatness*, *Little House on the Freeway*, *Connecting Church and Home*, and *Grace Filled Marriage*. Tim and his wife Darcy count their role as parents and grandparents as one of their greatest joys. God has blessed them with four children, their children's spouses, and a growing number of grandkids. Tim is a graduate of Bryan College (BA), Dallas Theological Seminary (Th.M.), and Western Seminary (D.Min.).

Raising children who become truly great adults may be the goal of a parent, but there are factors and forces that make it a difficult goal to achieve.

I. Obstacles to Raising Truly Great Kids

Obstacle No. 1: We misunderstand our role as a parent.

A. We are encouraged to prioritize the wrong things by overemphasizing:

- Education
- Appearance
- Competition and _____

B. We are encouraged to over-parent to compensate for our:

- Intimidating culture ... which leads to fear-based parenting.
- Personal inadequacies which leads to _____ - _____ parenting.

C. We are encouraged to sub contract/outsource our parenting responsibilities.

Obstacle No. 2: Our job as a parent is complicated.

A. Our culture is antagonistic to families.

- Our _____ lifestyles are undermining our efforts.
- Stress and fatigue cause us to default to emotional thinking.
- We are raising our kids in a culture that doesn't recognize _____ absolutes.

- B. Difficult Circumstances work against us.
- Lack of training and a role model in our past
 - The challenging configuration of many homes

Single Parents and Blended Families

You face additional challenges as you raise your kids for true greatness. Remember:

1. Commit your family to God and pray for extra strength and guidance.
2. Keep your expectations realistic.
3. Surround yourself with supportive friends and family.
4. Deal with your own fears and pain in order to help your children deal with theirs.
5. All of the principles discussed in this conference apply to you and your family.

Obstacle No. 3: We don't start out with a clear and achievable plan.

- A. Our pre-suppositions about what works are flawed.
- Some good intentions work against us.
 - License
 - Legalism

B. *Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Psalm 127: 1a*

C. Families are under great stress and we need more than quick fixes. We need a theology of family to guide us.

II. Grace-based Parenting has many benefits:

- It curbs sibling rivalry.
- It empowers kids to focus better in school.
- It inclines them toward better friends.
- It prepares them to deal with difficult people.
- It gives children more respect for leadership.
- It helps kids respond positively to correction.
- It sets them up to be greater assets for the future.

III. Grace-based Parenting is the foundation for raising Truly Great Kids who:

- Love big
- Act humbly
- Work hard
- Receive thankfully
- Laugh often
- Give generously
- Forgive freely
- Serve gladly
- Think abundantly