

Parenting - God's Greatest Gift

A Lecture By Paul Solomon

We present this in lecture format to retain Paul's original wording as closely as possible.

The Lecture:

There are a lot of very, very important jobs in the world. There are politicians who can actually change the course of history, affect the lives of million. There are educators both in the universities and in the primary and secondary schools who can affect the lives of children and teach them in ways that shape the consciousness of our nation. There are ministers and spiritual leaders, there are people in business, most all of these people, we think about very seriously. We train our doctors very carefully because they can have a profound effect upon health and upon lives. All of these important positions, we give a great deal of importance on education and preparation.

And it seems to me that there is one job that is the biggest job on the planet, the most demanding job, the most challenging, perhaps also the most rewarding. But it is a job that nobody's trained for. There isn't a school for Parenting, and we seem to think that most anybody is qualified to do it. And it sort of happens by chance. And that is the job, of all jobs, that can make the most difference in the course of history and the lives of people.

We can never know when we usher in the birth of a child what that child's destiny is. In fact, I've met with a lot of parents within the last few years who have looked into the eyes of a baby and wondered, "Isn't that child wiser than I am?"

And then as that child grows, a year or two, especially when he begins to talk, then that same parent comes back and says, "Yeah, I was right. The child is wiser than I am."

And here are these wonderful children, coming in particularly in this day and age, with an enormous capacity to make a difference in the direction of the planet, and they grow up being constantly exposed to influences that most of us, I think, have discovered are often irrational and damaging. Damaging thoughts, beliefs, habits, damaging ways of interacting with one another, beliefs that almost everyone on the planet has come to question.

Fortunately, we live in an age when people have largely begun to drop old models. Instead of just depending on what the church says or what the school says, or what the medical or scientific community says, we are in an age when people ask questions for themselves and want to know and don't necessarily accept old values.

People Are Asking Questions

The most beautiful thing about our age is the fact that people are asking questions and wanting to know for themselves.

There are more people asking to know God in a personal way than every before in all of history, rejecting the stock answers, and asking more questions when the answers stop.

Many people are seeking, and there is a very interesting thing about seeking. A great teacher 2,000 years ago said that's what your responsibility really is. "Seek and ye shall find." And he implied that finding is not your responsibility. Seeking is. And if you are really seeking, then God will take care of the finding. God will make sure that if you continue to seek, that you will find.

And so if we have a generation of people who are seeking, asking questions, looking for answers, then we have a generation that has the capability of changing the direction of thought on the planet.

It isn't often that we think that I could, with my life, just one person, little old me, make a real difference in the way that the world is going. And in fact, when we think about it, look at all the history, a few thousand years of history. We probably had an impression that over the centuries, year after year century after century, generation after generation, there has always been evil, there has always been fighting, there has always been ego conflict, and it would be a little absurd to assume that we could change that in a generation and start a different kind of relationship on the planet. And I find that so many people, millions of people, actually believe that we should have a new way of relating and new rules, new laws. People believe that we *should* have peace on the planet. There are very few people who believe that we *can* have peace on the planet. After all humans are humans, and they are going to make mistakes and they are going to fight and there is going to be evil, jealousy, hatred, and competition..

But who made that rule? Why do we believe that these things will continue? Isn't there just the possibility that some generation will come along that will establish new beliefs, new sets of values, new ways of relating and communicating and getting along with one another.

Isn't it just possible that the planet can change into what has been called an Aquarian Age, a New Age of cooperation, of love, of harmony? Isn't it possible? There have been people who believe that it is.

One Single Life Altered History

And there have been a few people in history who were presumptuous enough, perhaps that's the word, to believe that their life, that one single life, their personal life, could make a difference. There have only been a handful of them. Very few. But that handful has actually changed, altered history.

There have been so few times that history was absolutely altered by a great mass movement, except when there was one person at the head of that movement who believed in himself in a different way from the beliefs of the masses. And it may be that inspiration, that idea, that one person, a single person can change history is a place for us to start in considering the responsibility of being a parent.

If you don't believe that your life can change history, if you don't believe that you are capable the way governments are relating right now, do you agree that that should happen?

I believe that our governments, the governments of our nations, need to learn different ways of relating to one another, supporting one another, cooperating with one another and throw away the idea that it is by force that we control one another. But I also believe that if there is to be such a change in the relationship between governments, there will have to be a change in the relationship between siblings. If you are having wars in your family, then you can be sure that there will be wars when those children grow up, and they may be the leaders of those wars. We may find the armies behind them.

It would be a good idea to take responsibility for peace now, at home, in the family, with your youngsters, with yourself and believe that that difference can make a difference in the whole planet. And if your life is not the life that will make that difference, it just might be that child that you are playing host to.

There's little way of knowing the future of a child when he enters your life. There is no way of knowing what affect that child may have for good or harm on the rest of society. For that reason, it is an enormous responsibility to be an influence in that life in the early years, to help and direct it and shape it.

Now one thing that I would like for us to avoid in this discussion for this workshop is the egotistical belief that these children are really going to be the product of our teaching and our mistakes. I think that we must take responsibility for our teaching and our parenting and as if that were so, but I think we also should notice something else.

Very often children turn out to be absolutely beautiful in spite of our best efforts at parenting, and we probably should begin our relationship as a parent by thanking God for that and then taking responsibility for the influence that we do have in their lives.

The Pregnant People

Two thousand years ago, just a little more than that actually, there was a very wise teacher who appeared in the Middle East, in Israel. He was called by his followers The Teacher of Righteousness. And this teacher, along with some others in his group of students put a community together. This community of people and called themselves the Essenes which means *The Pregnant People*. The word Essenes means expectant or pregnant., and this group of pregnant people had a belief about themselves that they had a very special purpose. They called themselves pregnant for a very special reason.

They had grown up in the Jewish state, the Jewish heritage, and in their heritage they had been taught that there is coming a particular man or a particular consciousness among men that is to be called the Messiah. And this man, this Messiah, would be the way shower not only to the Jewish nation, but to the world, to show people the way to God. And this Messiah would be born of God and of man.

This Teacher of Righteousness taught these people that they had a special responsibility to make it possible for this being to enter into earth. They called themselves Expectant or Pregnant because they considered it their responsibility to create an atmosphere as a community that would be conducive to his entry, the kind of vibration if you want to use that very modern word, the kind of atmosphere, the kind of setting into which a Master could enter.

There were several things that they did to make that possible, and what they did might very well be a manual for parenting because they all considered themselves parents of this one child, and some of the things that made it in particular quite interesting.

All of the girls in the community were considered potential mothers of this Messiah who was to come, and so these girls were kept on a very special regimen of diet and exercise, meditation, and they were taught in very special ways.

Diet of Words Regulated Too

They were separated from influences that were thought to be harmful to their development, and among those influences were being subjected to negative emotions. So that one of the rules in the community was if you are experiencing anger or jealousy or any kind of negative emotion, make sure that you don't express it, you don't feel it in the presence of these girls because that was considered part of their diet. The words that they heard were part of the diet. The belief was that those words go into their consciousness and form a response in their body, in their balance. The words would have an effect on the health of that potential child just as the nutrition in the form of food would have an effect on that child. So their diet was regulated even in terms of words that they heard, ideas expressed or emotions set in motion in their presence.

I find it interesting that the influence of that community was so strong that it has been carried forward to this day in the tradition of watching the language in the presence of women. It was a direct result of the teaching of this particular Teacher of Righteousness. The idea of chivalry came from caring for women as if every woman in our culture is a potential mother of the Christ.

They all considered themselves to be pregnant, the men too, so that their discipline of worship and attunement was such that an atmosphere would be established into which this child might come. And the purpose of life, the value of life was thought to be to become, to be that vessel through which the Christ could be born.

It's a fascinating study, a fascinating thought that people should live this way. It's fascinating especially that this community so conquered their ego and their identity as a

community that when the Messiah did come and begin to teach, they felt that their identity as a community was finished. They didn't have that pride of community that said, "Well, we're going to continue as the Essenes even though he is here and keep our thing together." Instead, they were no longer the Pregnant people, expecting him. They were now the supporters of him. And so the community changed. It changed into a new direction of feeding and supporting that which has been born.

The whole history of that community is like a study of the development of an individual, and the individual who is going to be a parent would be wise to approach parenthood in something like the same way.

When Do We Start Training?

When you talk about being a parent, it's difficult to begin a class or a workshop in parenting and know just where to start because it's a little late to start being a parent when the child is born. In fact, it's a little late to start your preparation even at conception because there are preparations that should be made for the conception. But then there are preparations that should be made for the marriage too in which that conception is going to take place. And if we're going to make preparation for that marriage, for bringing two people together, then there needs to be preparation in each of those people before they meet each other. Now we're getting back to the teens, aren't we?

And then of course there is a responsibility of the parents of those teens to prepare them for parenthood. Where do you start? It keeps going back and back and back.

I guess we have to start where we are now in any case, and many of us have children who are almost grown or grown. But still you have that responsibility of parenthood, and the responsibility doesn't change a great deal in this sense. The first thing that I must do in preparation for parenthood, even if my children are already half grown, I must first begin to work on myself, preparing myself to be a parent even if I'm already a parent. And that preparation for parenthood, should take, I think, several stages.

One, perhaps the most important of them all, the foundation, the keystone to being a successful parent is to realize that there are two gifts that I am going to be giving. I can give to that child a beautiful world that is happy, joyous, full of peace, full of wonder, excitement, adventure, a great and joyous world, a great and joyous life. I can do that. And I can give to the world a whole, happy, healthy, joyous, loving child. I can make two gifts as a whole parent. And in order to make those two gifts, there are a couple of things that I need. I cannot give to a child a beautiful, adventurous, exciting, wholesome, healthy, joyous, happy, secure world if I don't have one. That's the place I must start.

We are tempted as parents to tell children what to believe, to tell them what to feel and what to act even if we are not experiencing that. As an example, as parents we very often tell children, "God will take care of you. Your Guardian Angel is overlooking you. Don't be afraid."

Learning By Example

And then that child sees us worrying about our relationship with our boss, about our relationship with our check book and our relationship with disease. When they see us experiencing a fearful world, a world of fear, anger, hostility, hurt, pain, it is pointless to tell that child, "God is looking after you. God loves you. God is in control."

That child has got to grow up with the question, "If God is in control, why are you having so much trouble? If it's really true that God is going to look after me, why is He doing such a bad job looking after you? If he's going to provide the things that I need, why are you worried about the rent?"

You can't teach the child what you are not experiencing as a real, solid fact. If it isn't working in your life, save your words. You'll only confuse them.

What we're really saying is you can only pass on to your child what you are and what you are experiencing. So reading books about what to say to them and how to discipline them is really putting the cart before the horse. Instead of reading books about parenting, maybe we'd better read some books about becoming the whole person. Or maybe to say that another way, our books about parenting should be books about parenting the child in me. If I can raise that precious tender child in me to be whole and health and expressive in joy through my life, then I can share that same experience with the child.

A Virgin in Consciousness

Perhaps each of us needs to think of ourselves as a possible mother. That may be difficult for you guys, but I think it would be wise for this reason. The ancient teachers use this kind of an illustration constantly. They said, "The heart or soul of every being is a womb. And every being, man and woman, is in fact, a potential mother. There is a womb within that can be impregnated by the consciousness of God. And that consciousness, that awareness of God within can be nurtured and developed until it is ready to express itself at birth. And when that birth occurs, it is the beginning of a new life for me. But the father of that child, the father of my new life, is God, and I was made pregnant by God because I was a virgin."

Meaning the moment that I quit making love to things that are not satisfying, when I quit thinking that, "When I have enough money, that's going to make a joyous life." When I quit thinking, "When I have enough attention, or popularity, or recognition or success,....., or whatever else it is that we're depending upon to be the father of our joy and happiness."

When I throw away all of those alternate lovers and say, "I'm empty of those influences. I know that it isn't any one of those things that will give me security, joy, happiness, love in life. I am empty. I am without those lovers," then I am virginal in consciousness. I am ready to be loved by the potential for expressing God. Then God is the influence that begins to grow in me, to become the source of security, to become the source of my

ability to love and to express love. When that is my security, when that is the father of the experience that I'm having of life, then I've given birth to this new child, this new life, that is now my life and I can share that with the child.

The preparation of myself might be to recognize who and what I am so that I can recognize that same thing in the child. Too often I see parents who have what I would call, I guess, a pride of parenthood in the sense of ordering a child to do something, being insulted if that child doesn't because: "You are supposed to obey me because I am a parent, and if you don't obey me you have insulted my all rightness."

And that pride of parenthood then teaches a problem to the child. First of all, the child, if he's very smart, is going to grow up recognizing your insecurities. You were insecure and using the child to give you alrightness. This is something that we tend to habitually do with everybody. "I want you to recognize my alrightness, and if you think that I'm not alright, I may be hurt or I may be angry. I'm going to condemn you and try to destroy your alrightness." And here we have this competition, argument, hurt, relationships problems with people around us.

Cornerstone Is Alrightness

The foundation, the cornerstone for raising a child is to have your alrightness already in tact. Meaning that if I know, if I have found out for myself, that what I am is in fact, all right. I am loved. I am beautiful. What I am is acceptable whether you recognize it or not. I have found that in me, in my relationship with myself, in my relationship with God.

When I come to that point, I'm not going to have the problem in the home of two parents trying to get their alrightness and recognition from one another and arguing about who is right and who is wrong. That sort of thing doesn't matter to a person who is secure in his own identity. If I am alright whether you agree with me or not, then I'm not going to have to argue and fight to get you to agree with me to establish my alrightness. And if I don't have to do that, then I'm not going to be putting that belief in a child that this is the way marriage functions. This is the way home life functions. This is the way people get along by tearing at each other to be right and to be all right, to be acceptable."

When a child grows up with a mother saying to a father, "You don't give me enough attention. You don't appreciate me enough," making it your responsibility to establish that I'm acceptable and all right, the child sees insecurity as a fact of life. They don't see, "That's the way my mother is." They see, "That's the way the world is." And it becomes a part of them as well.

Can you imagine a child who has grown up in a family where there are two adults sharing a life, each one of whom, each adult, who is loved consistently, all of the time. Each adult knows that he and she is loved and they are secure in that love, and never afraid of not being loved because it's always there. It's established. And both of those parents know, "I am all right. I am acceptable." Not if I make enough money. Not if I perform adequately. Not if I do the right thing. I am all right by my very nature. It's who I am. It's what I am. With two secure parents who don't feel that they must scrap and

scrape one another to get that attention, security and all rightness are going to pass to the child a presumption of alrightness in him as well.

You Are Beautiful

It's really nice. It's beautiful when parents enjoy the beauty and realize the beauty of their children and tell them so. It's something that we all should do. I think it's very important for each one of you as parents to tell your children, quite regularly, "You are in fact beautiful. You are wonderful. You are acceptable. You are even exceptional, a fantastic, beautiful person."

However, to tell that to a child when you don't believe it about yourself will be empty words because they will find the insecurity in them that you are expressing in you. It's something that we all would like to do, but it just can't be done. To give that child security and alrightness if I don't have it, doesn't work which is why I'm saying that beginning of parenting is to make a whole person. Not to make a whole person of that child, but to make a whole person of yourself.

And the primary factors in making a whole person of yourself are really two things. One is getting acquainted with your Source, getting to know as a fact - not because some preacher, religious leader, teacher, or writer has told you - that God exists and can interact with man. Not because somebody told you, but because you have found out and because you have a direct relationship, a direct interaction, between you and your Source. That includes discovering that you can in fact ask for direction and help and receive it. You can have a relationship with Source of teaching, protection, love, and healing working in your life. You know you have that relationship because you can see things in your life just working out perfectly.

As you have that kind of contact and relationship of knowing your Source personally, you know you have a Higher Consciousness. You have somebody to ask for answers that you can't figure out. That's invaluable for a parent because it's going to be tough to figure out all of the answers that you need with the left brain. You can't get that educated.

God Answers Questions

You can teach a child how to learn if you encourage their asking questions and finding out. And there are two ways that you can go about that. You can give a child an answer or you can admit to a child, "That is a profound and important question, and perhaps you and I together can find the answer."

Or maybe you can say to the child, "I'm convinced that there is more to your mind than you are using. There is a part of your mind that can talk with you in dreams. There is a part of your mind that can talk with you through your imagination. Why don't you just pretend that you have a Source, that God is somewhere in you. Then you can go inside yourself to talk with him. You can ask Him that question that you just asked me."

Now instead of making a cop out and saying to that child, "You go ask God and see what he tells you," make it a cooperative thing. Say to the child, "While you're doing that, I'll go ask God and see what he tells me as well and we'll compare notes."

When you have that child asking for inspiration in him and you are doing the same thing and the two of you together are trying to discover an answer to a question that that child has asked, then the child begins to think of the possibility that there are more ways to think and get answers than just to observe and figure it out. That's one thing that should be kept alive in a child from birth on. If that child is encouraged to think in this way, to get answers by asking and listening, then he will grow with the assumption that he can do so. And children who grow up with that assumption grow into people who think that it's all right to use their whole mind for thinking and learning. They are encouraged to be curious. When children ask questions, encourage them instead of thinking of that as being a nuisance. They will learn. They will find out things because they will consider finding out a very important part of life and grow through doing so. Let them do it with you.

And the other factor is the ability to love unconditionally. If you have sufficient love for yourself and you are one of two parents, you are going to find that you can make a marriage work. I know that you've been told over and over, "It takes two." And obviously where two people are involved in a relationship, there are two actions and two kinds of interactions. But even one person in a situation like that, who has joy and love and alrightness can put into that relationship the factors that will prevent a child being insecure.

Love Unconditionally

If I am whole, I cannot be thrown into feeling insecure and arguing about insecurity. I can put into the atmosphere of the home the wholeness that I have. Even if one person, both a single parent and parents in relationship, can dedicate themselves to wholeness, they will make wholeness a model for the child.

I give the a model of security in matters of money, in matters of health, and in other areas when I'm feeling loved. I feel loved because I take that responsibility myself. I may not always be consistently loved or feel consistently loved by my partner, by other people, but I can make a commitment to myself.

I was given a body that was is, intricate, delicate, complex, fascinating, highly responsive, and absolutely wonderful. And having such a body carries with it a responsibility. That body has to have love in order to function, and that's not your responsibility, it's mine. My body is my responsibility to give it love and appreciation. So is my mind. And if I'm taking care of them even when you're not, when you're not able to give love to me, I can still feel loved, I can still feel secure. I can still notice that this world is a joyous, adventurous, happy place, an exciting planet, a wonderful place to be. And instead of spending a great deal of time in front of the children talking about how bad the world situation is, how much worse it's going to get, and filling them with those beliefs about the planet, I will automatically share with them, "This is, in fact, a wonderful, joyous, happy, exciting place, and it's getting better."

A child who grows up in that kind of world is going to be an exciting, adventurous child. You've given him a joyous life not just by saying it, but by living it yourself. By knowing it and enjoying it, being secure in your relationship with your Source and yourself, you'll produce a child secure in his relationship with self and a child that is able to love self and others unconditionally.

When you do that, you will change not only yourself and your family, but you will be well on your way making a difference in the world. Let's do that together.

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