

Raising Spiritual Champions

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Host: David Wheaton 00:08

Raising Spiritual Champions. Dr. George Barna joins us today for that topic right here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program, where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host. The Christian Worldview is a listener supported radio ministry. You can connect with us by visiting our website, TheChristianWorldview.org, calling toll free 1-888-646-2233 or by writing to Box 401, Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Thank you for all your support and your notes of encouragement. Please know that we read every single one of them. We feel badly and apologize that we don't have time to answer all of them, but know that it is of immense encouragement to the whole Christian Worldview team. Now before we preview today's topic, three events this year for you to consider and get on your calendar.

- The first is Friday, April 12. This is going to be a Christian Worldview Speaker Series event with international journalist Alex Newman. Yes, he's coming back for a second straight year and the topic is going to be "How the Road to Global Governance Utilizes Environmentalism, the Educational System and the Economy. It's going to take place at Beacon of Hope church in St. Paul, Minnesota, again on Friday, April 12, at 7pm.
- The second is Friday, Saturday, June 21, and 22nd. This is going to be the Overcomer Course for young adults age 18 to 25. Now in eight sessions, over two days addressing life's most important issues. The course aims to help young adults gain clarity and conviction on God's plan and their purpose in it will take place at stone house farm in Jordan, Minnesota.
- The third event to put on your calendar takes place on Monday, September 16 2024. This is the Overcomer Foundation Cup at Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska, Minnesota. This is one of the best courses in the country, it's been host to Ryder Cup, the US Open, and many other major championships. By the way, non-golfers are welcome to attend this event to the post golf meal, and program. If you're a golfer, this is one event you should consider coming to even if you're not from the Upper Midwest, as Hazeltine is a treat to play. This is all in support of the Overcomer

Foundation, which is the charitable organization that oversees The Christian Worldview Radio Program.

All three of these events; the Speaker Series event with Alex Newman, the Overcome Course for young adults, and the Overcomer Foundation Cup. Details for them are all at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org.

It seems pretty straightforward. Scripture says, "*Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*" Ephesians 6:4. In other words, don't be overbearing with your kids, but bring them up (which means it's an ongoing process), correcting what is wrong and teaching what is right according to God's standard that He lays out in His Word. Anyone who has been around children knows that raising children is one of the greatest challenges and greatest blessings in life. It's a marathon, not a sprint. It's hard and exhausting dealing with an unregenerate child or even a Christian child who gives into their flesh.

But there's no greater joy than to have a child be born again and choose to love and follow the Lord. In his latest book, *Raising Spiritual Champions*, George Barna reveals extensive research when it comes to the worldview of parents, youth pastors, and children. Here are some of the headlines of that research. 68% of parents think of themselves as Christian, but only 2% have a biblical worldview. How he categorized someone with a biblical worldview is: A person who affirms the following seven basic tenets of the faith. I'll list them quickly:

- 1.) There is one supreme being as revealed by the Orthodox Biblical understanding of God.
- 2.) All human beings are sinful by nature.
- 3.) The consequences of our sin can only be forgiven and eliminated through Jesus Christ.
- 4.) The entire Bible is true, reliable and relevant.
- 5.) Absolute moral truth exists.
- 6.) The ultimate purpose of human life is to know, love and serve God.
- 7.) Success on Earth is best understood as consistent obedience to God.

If you affirm all those seven basic points, he will consider you to have a biblical worldview. For instance, his research also found that 64% of youth ministers believe there is no absolute moral truth. Less than 1% of 13 to 14 year old Americans have a biblical worldview. These data, at least partially explain why our nation is becoming more secular and more Godless generation after generation. But

you and your children are much more than a statistic. God gives Christians the roadmap and the resources to be the exceptions to these troubling trends. George, you have been involved in the pursuit of worldview for many decades. What got you so interested in understanding worldview? In other words, how and what people think?

Guest: George Barna 06:28

It's been more than three decades that I've been consistently looking at the worldview of Americans. I really believe, David, that if we don't solve the worldview crisis in America, America is going down the tubes. Worldview is really the center of our lives, because every decision that every person makes, every moment of every day of their life, flows through their worldview. When you look at the condition of a nation, or you look at the condition of a family, you look at the condition of an individual, that condition is based upon the decisions that that person, that family, that culture have made. Those decisions were all based on worldview. So ultimately, it all comes back to worldview. If we've got problems in our culture, the only way we're going to solve them is through our worldview. If you've got problems in your individual life, the only way you're going to solve them is to go back and take a deeper look at your worldview and figure out, How can I enhance it? How can I improve it?

Host: David Wheaton 07:31

How would you define worldview?

Guest: George Barna 07:35

It's the intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual filter through which we make every one of our decisions. Every choice that comes before us; we make 1000s of decisions every single day. Some are so small, we don't even realize we're making a decision. Some are major, and sometimes it takes us days to make that decision. But what we're really doing is we're putting the information and the opportunities that we have before us through this mental grid, through this filter that we have. That helps us to decide what's right and what's wrong, what's good, and what's bad, what's appropriate, what's inappropriate, and eventually making our decision based upon what our worldview has led us to believe.

Host: David Wheaton 08:25

George. We're going to get into that now. You say right away in chapter one that making adults into disciples is extremely difficult. The primary reason is that their worldview has already been established. According to the research that you've done, it changes very little, if at all, after the age of 13. By the age of 13, most people's worldview is so deeply formed, that it rarely endures

significant change. You go on to say, this is underscored by the fact that about two thirds of all Americans, whoever accept Jesus Christ as their Savior, do so before the age of 13. Now, George, of course God has a unique plan for each person when they come to saving faith. There are many examples in Scripture. The apostle Paul. Abraham came to saving faith later than the time he was 13. But of course, many people who do come to saving faith, it occurs before that time. There isn't a biblical mandate though, or there isn't even a model to prioritize evangelizing or discipling children more so than adults. I mean, when Jesus and the disciples went around, their ministry wasn't a 13 and under. I think I know what your intent of this thread, this theme that runs through your entire book is. It's that we need to prioritize reaching children when they're young. Tell us about that.

Guest: George Barna 09:56

What you're talking about really goes back to the biblical principle that is established in Proverbs which is, *Train up a child in the way he should go, and he won't depart from it.* I would say that the other side of that coin is just as true. If you don't train up a child in the way he should go, he's not going to go the way he should go. He's going to go the way the culture wants him to go, the way that his heart drives him to go, the way that his peers push him to go. That's one aspect of it. But the other, again, I'm a researcher and so I've looked at the research, and over the last 30 years, one of the things that's become clear, is that people have been developing their worldview younger and younger.

When you say, well, the disciples didn't seem to be ministering to children. Yes, we may not have that recorded as much, but Jesus certainly cared about the children. He talked about that. He taught about that. The research today, is showing us that a person's worldview is pretty much established by the age of 13. Why the difference? Largely because of media impact.

Back in Jesus' day, you didn't have Instagram, you didn't have Tik Tok, you didn't have Facebook, you didn't have 400 TV channels, you didn't have music ever present on Spotify, and YouTube and all these other places. Today, children are overwhelmed with messages through the media. We can talk about media later on, if you want, but the point I want to make here is that kids are driven to make choices at an earlier age today than they ever had to before. They're given more information than they ever had before, so they've got the grist for their intellectual and emotional mills to help them make those choices. Maybe the one thing they're not getting is the spiritual input that they need. You alluded to some of the research I've done in the past year or so, where we found that most senior pastors of Christian churches do not have a biblical worldview.

Also, the book talks about children's pastors, and the fact that only 12% of them, just about one out of every eight of children's pastors have a biblical worldview. Why does that matter? Because you can't give what you don't have.

I've made the statement publicly a number of times, you're probably putting your child in spiritual jeopardy by bringing them to the church, because they're going to be exposed to an incredible number of secular ideas and behaviors that are honored by the person who's running that children's ministry. So it's more imperative than ever, that parents recognize it is their biblical responsibility to raise their children. They can't simply drop the kids off at a church and say, Here, you're the spiritual professional, you do it. It doesn't work that way in terms of responsibility. But now we're finding it doesn't even work that way in terms of substance. They may not be getting the kind of spiritual substance and training and direction and accountability that they need as children to become disciples of Jesus.

Host: David Wheaton 13:20

Very well said. That highlights the point even more that it's the parents responsibility. There's the passage in scripture in the New Testament, Ephesians 6:4, *Fathers do not provoke your children to anger [and here's the command], but raise them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.* This is the priority for a parent, a father and a mother to be able to do. It also underscores, as you said with the local church, that you just can't make assumptions. You need to be in a very sound, Bible teaching local church. That's rare, that's hard to find, but there's such an importance of doing that with such a low percentage of those who lead churches who will be able to convey a really solid biblical worldview to children.

George, on page 35 of your book you say, raising their children to be disciples was identified as their top priority by just one out of every four born again Christian parents. That means three out of every four born again parents have priorities they are pursuing that they consider to be more important than raising their children to be spiritual champions. So George, if Christian parents are not thinking that raising my child in the discipline and instruction of the Lord is my top and primary responsibility, what are they thinking for their children?

Guest: George Barna 14:42

This is one of those interesting kinds of loops where you see how worldview works. So you've got born again parents, most of whom, a huge majority, more than nine out of 10 of whom do not have a biblical worldview giving what they have. Now what do they have? They have what they think is important in life. What's important to them? Happiness, comfort, security. When they think about

their children, those are the kinds of things that they're thinking about for their kids. They're not thinking about, How can I raise them up to know, love and serve the Lord with all their heart mind, strength and soul?

What they're doing is they're thinking, How can I make sure that they get the best possible education? How can I do everything in my power to see to it that they're going to be able to make enough money to live comfortably in the kind of home that they want, with the kind of possessions they want? Those are the types of things that we found parents are more interested in. Things like the health of their children. They're more interested in making sure that their children are physically healthy than to ensure that they're spiritually healthy.

Host: David Wheaton 18:30

George, let me read from page 26 where you talk about the worldview or the beliefs of 13 to 14 year olds today and how it's different than previous generations. You say, "Few children these days accept worldview teaching from their parents without question. 17% of 13 to 14 year olds agree that people are born into sin and can only be saved from the consequences of sin by Christ." Only 17% of children believe that. Now, these 13 and 14 year olds, is that for professing Christian 13 and 14 year olds or is that overall?

Guest: George Barna 19:16

That's overall. It's not terribly different among the kids who are born again.

Host: David Wheaton 19:22

You say, "This profile helps to explain why less than 1% of 13 and 14 year old Americans have a biblical worldview. Less than 1%. This is a profile of a class of people immersed in spiritual turbulence and deceit." That's very well said. That's exactly what's going on in our society. Look on social media. Kids and the whole transgender movement. Kids are being inundated and you can see the effect on them in so many ways. Why don't children today believe, trust their authorities, their parents, and so forth, as they seemed to do more so in previous generations? You mentioned it's media. Talk more about how the media today is something parents must manage, media exposure, because it's just so detrimental?

Guest: George Barna 20:13

Well, there are two different questions in there. The first one has to do with why aren't they taking their cues from their parents first and foremost? One of the fascinating things I found in the research for this book was that kids essentially don't trust their parents to help them as a child to make good

decisions. Now, why is that? What we found is that kids were telling us, "My parents mean well. I know that they probably love me, but they say one thing and they do another. They tell me that I'm supposed to behave in a particular way, but then they behave in a very different way. So what that tells me as a child trying to figure out how life works, is that my parents are so confused too. They don't really get it. Or, they don't believe what they're telling me. They're just telling me what they think they're supposed to tell me."

What children are doing is they're interpreting that as an invitation to take matters into their own hands. So they go out into the marketplace and they try to figure out what's happening. What's the best way to live? What are the best decisions to make? Now, as they're doing that, they're being inundated with information, much of it very compelling, because it's in video form, it has music, it has attractive characters, it has interesting story lines, and all of the media that they're being exposed to professes some type of worldview.

I've also got a chapter in the book where we look at the worldviews that are given to children and the most popular children's media today. What we found is that the biblical worldview is completely absent. Kids who spend, depending on their age and their circumstances, anywhere from 6 to 10 hours per day, absorbing media messages, are being bombarded with worldly ideas about how to think and how to live, that are the opposite of what God teaches us in His Word. That's one of the reasons why in that chapter that you mentioned, I talked about what a parent can do about media.

They've got to minimize it, monitor it, moralize it, and they've got to model it. Those four things are critical. Because otherwise, what we're finding is that media is the dominant shaper of the worldview of children in America today. Parents do and can have an influence. Churches, by and large, are having almost no discernible influence on the worldview shaping of children in America today. So there's some major shifts that are going to have to take place if we're serious about being a nation that wants to honor Jesus.

Host: David Wheaton 23:12

Let's go to another key influencer of children. The educational system. George, what have you found about the public educational system and how that has changed even over the last 5 years, 10 years? What is going on there? What kind of impact is that having on children,

Guest: George Barna 23:57

Particularly over the last four or five years, the public education system in America, which is the place where more than four out of five young people get their education, has become essentially an

indoctrination system. God is consistently removed from the conversation, from the education, from the relationships that take place, and from any kind of accountability that may happen on school campuses. Kids who are Christian and talk about Jesus or want to learn about Christianity, in many, many public school systems across the country, are actually disciplined for that desire, that interest, that pursuit.

It's become a bit of a dangerous place for children if the intent is that they would get any kind of biblical perspectives, not necessarily just because it's from the Bible, but that's always been the hallmark of American society. When you look at traditional American values, which is what the American school system has taught and promoted for years and years, that's now been replaced by a completely different value system that's no longer based on biblical principles. It's based on Marxist principles, postmodern principles, secular humanist principles, even Wiccan and satanic principles.

I've got a study in the field that we just finished. We haven't released it publicly yet. But looking at the early data, I can tell you that a lot of the things now that are being pushed in public schools, public universities, really are parallel to things that are taught in the Church of Satan or in Wiccan circles. Parents have to be very aware of what's taking place in the classroom, what curriculum is being used, what kind of testing is being done, and what the beliefs of the teachers are, because you can only give what you have. If you don't have biblical principles as the operating system for your life, there's no way you're going to give them.

Host: David Wheaton 26:10

You're right. Something changed. It was pretty obvious what changed in the last three or four years in this country where the new religion has become the religion of wokeism, and that has been integrated everywhere. Whereas I think previously, George, you may have been in a school district who didn't buy into that, I think it's very difficult to be anywhere in a public educational system now where that isn't the the main worldview that's being impressed, indoctrinated on these children as they go.

Let's talk about what to do about this, George. You say on page 30 of your book, "Consistency was described by the parents of now adult spiritual champions, as well as those grown children themselves as the single most important attribute in the spiritual formation practices of those Christ followers. They uniformly emphasized the significance of having clear biblical principles as the discipling foundation, practicing those beliefs through behavior, and never deviating from those principles." Explain that more. How this consistency of having biblical principles being the

foundation of your life and your home, how that has to be modeled, and then really how to assess how a child is doing along the way, and whether he is keeping those and going in the right direction.

Guest: George Barna 27:46

Consistency is such a critical thing. Again, that's one of the things that destroyed the sense of trust that American children have with their parents. When you watch somebody and their behaviors, their speeches, their communication is inconsistent, you think, Well, they really don't know what they believe. They really don't know who they are. They really don't know what their life is about or where they're going, or what matters. So I'm not going to imitate them. I want to find somebody who's appealing to me, somebody I can trust, and I want to imitate them. That was the whole thing that Jesus did with His disciples. Everything he taught was consistent. Now, it blew their minds because it was different than what their culture was teaching. In many cases, it was even different than what their rabbis had been teaching.

Nevertheless, Jesus was compelling enough that they continued to look at Him and say, wow, that's interesting. And they'd watch it some more. Eventually, they would imitate that. One of the key principles that I talk about in the book is understand, disciples make disciples. If you want your child to be a follower of Jesus, you need to be a follower of Jesus. The way that you disciple somebody, there are a number of different things that I talk about, roughly a dozen or so activities that are common in effective discipleship today, and one of those which you alluded to, is modeling.

That is demonstrate for people what it looks like, how it's done. That gives them the opportunity not only to watch it in action, and based on that, to make a decision that yes, I want to do that. Yes, I can do that. But it also then gives them the opportunity to ask you questions about how did you do that? Why did you do that? And for you to give the apologetic behind the behavior.

One of the key things that I teach in all the worldview training that I do, is if you want to live like Jesus, first you've got to think like Jesus because you do what you believe. So if you do what you believe your beliefs are critically important. You've got to think, you've got to believe the right things first. Then from those beliefs, because you really buy into them, your actions will flow out of that. When you've got somebody discipling you, like a parent, they can lovingly come alongside of you and say, You know what? We believe that Jesus is the Son of God. And you did this behavior over here, which really didn't honor Jesus. Or that behavior is something that the Bible teaches is sinful. So again, you really aren't doing the things that are bringing glory to God through how you're living your life. That's what a discipler does. They come up alongside.

Host: David Wheaton 30:44

What about the second part of that question about how to assess how a child is doing?

Guest: George Barna 30:50

The best way I discovered from studying disciplers is that, in order to have that kind of influence on someone's life, you have to have built a trust based relationship with them. Then you can go through that one on one coaching process. But what's that based on? The relationship. It's through that relationship, that you're spending time with the person. And as you're spending time with the person you're discipling, you have the opportunity to observe what they're saying, what they're doing, how they're living, what they're desiring.

That gives you not only a sense of, are they growing? Are they getting closer to Christ like life? But it gives you the opportunity to have a very direct conversation with them about, you know what? You're making great progress. I think the Lord is probably really pleased with how much progress you're making, as you're trying to live His ways. But here's something that I saw you do. Let's talk about why you said this, or why you did that. That's how somebody grows. It's through that iron sharpening iron.

Again, Proverbs giving us the wisdom of, how do you grow a person? It's through that relationship, it's through the observation, it's through the dialogue that takes place. That really is what a coach does. You know, you see a coach on a football field, a player comes off the field after missing a tackle if it's a football game, and the coach goes over to him and says, You know what? You were positioned wrongly, your body, goes through all the things to try to help that player to know next time how to do it better. It's no different in spiritual training. When you're someone's spiritual coach, you want to have those same kinds of conversations, recognizing we're on the same team. I love you. I'm 100% behind you. But when I see things that you're doing wrong, I need to come alongside you and help you understand that.

Host: David Wheaton 32:53

You emphasize the importance of asking questions, almost a Socratic method of drawing someone out and having the child come to their own conclusion because ultimately, for them to want to follow God and follow Christ and follow His Word, that needs to be internalized, that needs to be for themselves, they have to want to do that. You can't do it for your child. Explain how you can use questions as a parent to really communicate the truths you're trying to help them understand and believe and follow.

Guest: George Barna 36:14

Often when a child does a behavior that's not Christ like, they don't understand how it conflicts with God's principles. So rather than beating the kid up and saying, you know, that was really stupid, I taught you not to do that. That's not going to get you very far because now you've set up a conflict situation. When you go into conflict, what you try to do is defend yourself and protect yourself. Instead, what you want to do is go to the child and say, Hey, I saw you do that behavior over there. Explain to me why you did that. What were you thinking when you did that? It gives the child a chance to explain what they were thinking.

As a discipler, what I've got to do then is to take their reasoning and convert it back into biblical thinking. Here's something for you to think about. When you did that, it actually is at odds with what Jesus teaches us to do in a situation like that. Do you remember the story of and then you tell him the biblical story that has the principle embedded in it. That was Jesus trying to explain to his disciples, that when you get in a situation like the one that you were just in, sure, you could do what you just did, or you could do something that honors God, which is what he described in that parable. So those are the kinds of conversations you want to have. You're not trying to butt heads with the kid.

What you're trying to do is to help them know, I'm on your side, God loves you, I love you. We all want the best outcomes for you. When we see something taking place that isn't really honoring God, I think it's part of my role as your parent to bring that to your attention. Now let's work on that together. And by the way, part of this whole discipling process, the research that I did on that, I found that great disciplers are involved in a mutually discipling relationship. Meaning yes, maybe I'm a bit more sophisticated in my faith than you are and so I can teach you some things, I can hold you accountable for some things, but I'm not Jesus. I'm not God.

I'm not perfect. I make mistakes. I sin. I forget things. So even as the person that I'm discipling, if you see me doing stuff that's not honoring God, I invite you, I'm asking you, please tell me about those things. Let's discuss them. Just like I want to discuss any kind of failings spiritually on your end, let's discuss my spiritual failings as well. Because that's the only way I'm going to get better. That mutual accountability is very important, and inviting the person that you're discipling even if it's your child, to tell them look, if you see me doing something that's opposed to what I just taught you, or what I just exhorted you to do, you let me know, because then that means I need to learn that lesson just like you do.

Host: David Wheaton 39:27

I want to read another quote from your book. You say, "Remember the behaviors that Christ enumerated as the marks of a disciple that were to love God more than anyone else, or to abandon anything that hinders your love of God or ability to follow Him, or to accept His authority over all aspects of your life, or to obey His teaching, or to love other people or to produce spiritual fruit.

Envision the lifestyle that such a commitment produces. When consistently and joyfully practiced, that lifestyle motivates other people to become enthusiastic, fully engaged disciples." Now, George, we tend to pursue in life what we love, what we desire. The desires of our heart is what we want to go after. So we always have this battle, like Galatians 5 says, between our flesh, and if we're saved, the spirit.

They're in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please the passage says. So how to grow in our affections, our love and desires, for the things of God, away from the things that we shouldn't be desiring, or that are unimportant desires,. It could be something that's not inherently sinful, like just watching too much sports on TV. So how to grow in our love and desire for the Lord and the things of the Lord and model that to our children to love the same and to turn away from the desires that are either unimportant, or just outright sinful?

Guest: George Barna 41:23

You know, when you look at those six passages in the scriptures, where Jesus specifically outlines, this is what a disciple is, the one in John 15, where he talks about, you will be My disciple, if you produce a lot of spiritual fruit. That's critically important. So when you're talking about, how do you use your time? How do you use your energy? How do you use your relationships? Your influence? Part of it is recognizing that God gives us those resources not for us, He gives them to us to use for Him. That's how we demonstrate our love for Him.

By producing fruit for Him, advancing His kingdom, having the mind of Christ. When Jesus came down here, He wasn't trying to become the best known person, during His three years of public ministry. If anything, His actions show that He was doing the opposite. He was investing in individuals, so they would go out and do the same thing. We've got to have in our minds not what the world, not what our culture and society tells us matters, not what our heart is driving us to, but what God's Word drives us to. So I would say if producing spiritual fruit is one of the great hallmarks of a disciple, let's go back into God's Word, and figure out what really matters to God. What are the

kinds of things that we need to be producing in this world to bring Him joy? That's our responsibility here on Earth.

So getting those kinds of things right in our mind, a lot of times, what we found in the research is that it's because people don't really believe that the Bible was given to us by God for our benefit. They think it's a book of don'ts and punishments, as opposed to a love letter from God, saying, I want you to thrive. Here's how you can do it. I want you to be closer to me. I want us to have a deeper love relationship. We need to be more intimate, here's how that can happen. Sometimes it's as simple as getting people to understand the Bible is completely true. It's for your benefit. That's why it's important that you not just read it on occasion, but that you study it every day. Because that's to be your blueprint for life.

Host: David Wheaton 43:52

Following the Lord is counterintuitive to what culture says. Often our flesh says, but following the Lord fully actually produces the most joy in us. We often think that I'm going to go after these pleasurable things of life. They're just temporary pleasures, but following Christ is where the greatest joy comes. Knowing that and believing that and following that, we will discover that our affection should be toward the things of the Lord.

George, a final question for you today. I don't remember where this was in your book, but I wrote the quote down. I'll conclude with this. You say, "To succeed at disciple making [today we're talking about disciple making with those who are our own children] requires a thoughtful and diligent commitment to the process. First, nobody can be forced into being a disciple. It is an act of will by each individual. [You can't just by force of your personality, and laying down the law, make your child go the way you want them to go]. As a disciple maker then, you must realize that making disciples is beyond your capacity.

The best you can hope to do is become a disciple and then appropriate the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit [talking to us through His Word], to encourage others to choose to become disciples. With that choice in place, you may then follow the pathway that is most likely to lead them to genuine discipleship themselves." What would be your summary exhortation after all we've discussed today? What would you like to leave parents of younger children with today?

Guest: George Barna 45:30

Let me also add, David, it's not just parents. It's grandparents, it's teachers, it's children's pastors, anyone who has influence on children. It's the greatest opportunity you're going to have in your

lifetime. So prioritize that in your life. Make sure that you understand that if you have the privilege of bringing a young child to Christ, and then discipling them, that's critical. It's not just about evangelism. When Jesus gave the Great Commission, it's a commission about disciple making.

I have a phrase where I talk about evangelism without discipleship is spiritual abuse. Make sure that what you're really doing is you're bringing them into the full knowledge and relationship with Jesus Christ. That's going to take time. You've got to be willing to abandon some of those other desires that the world is pushing on you in order to prioritize the privilege that God is giving to you to lead a younger person into a deeper, more intimate, lifelong relationship with God, where they then are going to turn it around and make other disciples. That is the church. That's the church at work. That's when you are being the Church that Jesus died for.

I'd encourage you to be thinking about that, nobody inherits a biblical worldview. That's something that they have to choose to buy into. So represent it well. Know what you believe, know why you believe it. Be able to give a reason for the hope that's within you, and be willing at all times to share that with children, and to be part of that spiritual journey that they're on.

Host: David Wheaton 47:15

That's so well said, George. Thank you for coming on The Christian Worldview today. All of God's best and grace to you.

Guest: George Barna 47:21

Thanks so much, David. It's been a pleasure being with you again. God bless you.

Host: David Wheaton 47:26

You can order Dr. George Barna's book that we've been discussing, *Raising Spiritual Champions*, by going to our website, the Christianworldview.org, giving us a call toll free at 1-888-646 2233, or by writing to Box 401, Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

We also need to be cognizant of the fact that some people don't have children. Having children is not the be all and end all in life. For people who don't have children, God has an important call for them as well. Now, for those who do have children, there can sometimes be this notion because parenting is hard, that children are seen as burdensome. But we need to be reminded what God says in His Word in Psalm chapter 127. *Behold, children are a gift of the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. How blessed is the*

man whose quiver is full of them! They will not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate.

We need to be reminded of what God's Word says about having children and the opportunity to raise them and disciple them when we go through some of the hard times where it becomes difficult. So for parents, after your salvation, when you're born again, and the process of sanctification going on in your life and your husband or wife's life, raising your children in the discipline and the instruction of the Lord should be of top priority for you.

I wrote down a few bullet points of things to keep in mind, I guess you could say about discipling your children:

1.) You must be saved in growing yourself. You can't give what you don't have. That's just obvious. So if you don't have true saving faith, and if you aren't growing in your own faith, you're not going to be able to pass that on to your son or daughter.

2.) You must be convinced of the priority of raising your children in the Lord and then pursue it, knowing that the discipleship of children is a marathon, not a sprint, with many ups and downs. So be prepared. Don't go in thinking this is going to be you check these three boxes and your children are going to turn out great. That's not the way it works.

3.) You must see child rearing as a sanctification process, not just for your children, but for you as well. You are being sanctified or refined from pursuing your own fleshly desires or unimportant desires through the ups and downs of raising your children. So embrace that sanctification process. It's hard to do, but that's what we should do.

4.) We must model and structure our home to raise children to follow the Lord. Here's a couple examples. Things like daily Bible reading, prayer, having spiritual discussions at home or in the car. Raising kids in the discipline and instruction of the Lord does not happen by accident. You don't just fall into this. There must be an intentionality about raising children.

5.) You must manage media very carefully. We are all a product of our influences. When kids take in tons of media, whether on television or the internet or elsewhere, they're being influenced by that media. It's the same for you. You can't be watching or taking in certain kinds of media and expect your children to watch you and stay away from it. You must model what kind of media is appropriate for a Christian.

6.) The importance of the local church. You must carefully evaluate your local church and the children's programs there and be willing to change churches if necessary. Because as you go to a grown up church, if you're sending your kids to children's church, what if they're being taught things that are completely contradictory to the Word of God. You must know that, be engaged there.

7.) You must be praying daily for your children. You must be trusting God with them. You must ask Him to give you perseverance on this long marathon of child rearing.

Frankly, this is one of the reasons we're doing the Overcomer Course for young adults. No, they're not children, but they're at an important time when they're transitioning away from their parents influence. The course is meant to clarify God's way. To help them develop convictions that maybe weren't developed earlier in their life. That's why this is going to be interactive with lots of discussion going back and forth. To nudge them, to urge them to go God's way.

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