A Parent’s Ambition February 25, 2024

*Matthew 20:20-28 .*

We cannot free ourselves from pride and selfish ambition; a divine rescue is absolutely necessary. – C. J. Mahaney

Intro: Toddlers & Tiaras

1. Parents often help their children up the wrong ladder
2. A mother jostling for position

v. 20 *the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons*

Matthew 27:56 *Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee*

* + Compare with Mark 15:40 and John 19:25

1. What won’t we do to help our kids get ahead?

v. 20 *kneeling before him she asked him for something*

1. What are you seeking for your children?

v. 21 *And he said to her, “What do you want?”*

v. 21 *Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.*

Matthew 17:1 *Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves.*

* What was wrong with Salome’s request in v. 21?
* What are some ways that parents can help their children up the wrong ladder?
* What’s the difference between selfish parental ambition and godly parental discipleship as it relates to education and career?

1. Helping children up the wrong ladder fuels pride, envy, and condescension
2. Are you fostering arrogance in your children?

v. 22 *You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?*

v. 22 *They said to him, “We are able.”*

Romans 12:16 *Do not be haughty … Never be wise in your own sight.*

Acts 12:1-2 *About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword …*

Revelation 1:9 *I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.*

1. Are you fostering envy in your children?

v. 24 *And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers.*

Galatians 5:26 *Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.*

1. Are you fostering condescension in your children?

v. 25 *You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them.*

* What does it mean to be “wise in your own sight”? How do avoid that in children? How do you avoid it in your own life?
* How do you encourage a healthy drive to accomplish what God has called a child to without them seeing others as rivals and envying those who have more?
* How do you help children not see themselves as better than other people?

1. Jesus’ ladder is one you travel down to help others up
2. Worldly ambition has no place among the people of God

v. 26 *It shall not be so among you.*

Luke 9:25 *For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?*

1. Greatness in God’s eyes comes in humble service

vv. 26-27 *whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave*

John 5:44 *How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?*

1. You don’t find salvation by climbing a ladder

v. 28 *even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

Matthew 23:12 *Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*

* How do people lose themselves in their pursuit of more?
* What would it look like for you to act more like a servant? How do you develop that attitude in children?
* Why do you have to humble yourself to be “exalted”? What does that mean?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study 1 Timothy 2:8-15.

Notes