

FBC Today

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[Physical]
Sundays 9:00am

SUNDAY SCHOOL
For Ages 3 to 12
(Preschool to std 6)
Physical Classes
8:45am / 11:15am

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(Ephesians 3:14-19)

A Parent's Reflections on Parenting

My Son is Embarking on a New Phase in His Life

"He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents" – Malachi 4:6a

A recent farewell dinner organised by my sister in honour of my son's departure for university, turned into an evening filled with heartfelt conversations about the essence of parenting.

It dawned upon me that my parenting journey revolves around four essential aspects: faith in God, relationship-building, letting go, and being a good example. These four criteria served as guiding principles which I also learnt along the way as I grew in my parenting journey.



NEXT WEEK'S SERMON
January 14, 2024
Who is God: Gentle and Lowly
PREACHER
Arnold Lim

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Faith serves as a strong foundation for a parent

I submit him to the Lord by constantly praying for him and asking for wisdom to guide him. I was further encouraged when he actively participated in our church's youth service and was involved in faith-based organisations like the Boys' Brigade in Malaysia.

My wife and I were surprised when he took the initiative to ask us about Christianity, especially about things he's uncertain about.

We see how studying God's Word guides his path (Psalm 119:105). It provides him with a moral compass, instils a sense of purpose, and encourages him to live a life guided by compassion, integrity, and empathy.

A positive relationship with my son helps him to be more open with me

I've found that spending quality time increases open communication with my son, develops his self-esteem, and gives him confidence to face life's challenges with resilience. It's not always easy for my wife and I to give our son his space, and to see him as his own person.

I was raised in a traditional Malaysian-Chinese family, which obliges children to fulfil their parents' expectations and wishes. When some of his thinking and decisions are not aligned with ours, we had to learn to just listen and pray together just as James 1:19b advises, *"...Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry."*



I gave him some advice only when it was needed. I have learnt to adopt this parenting style which is different from how I was raised.

Sometimes, I have to let go in order for him to be more independent

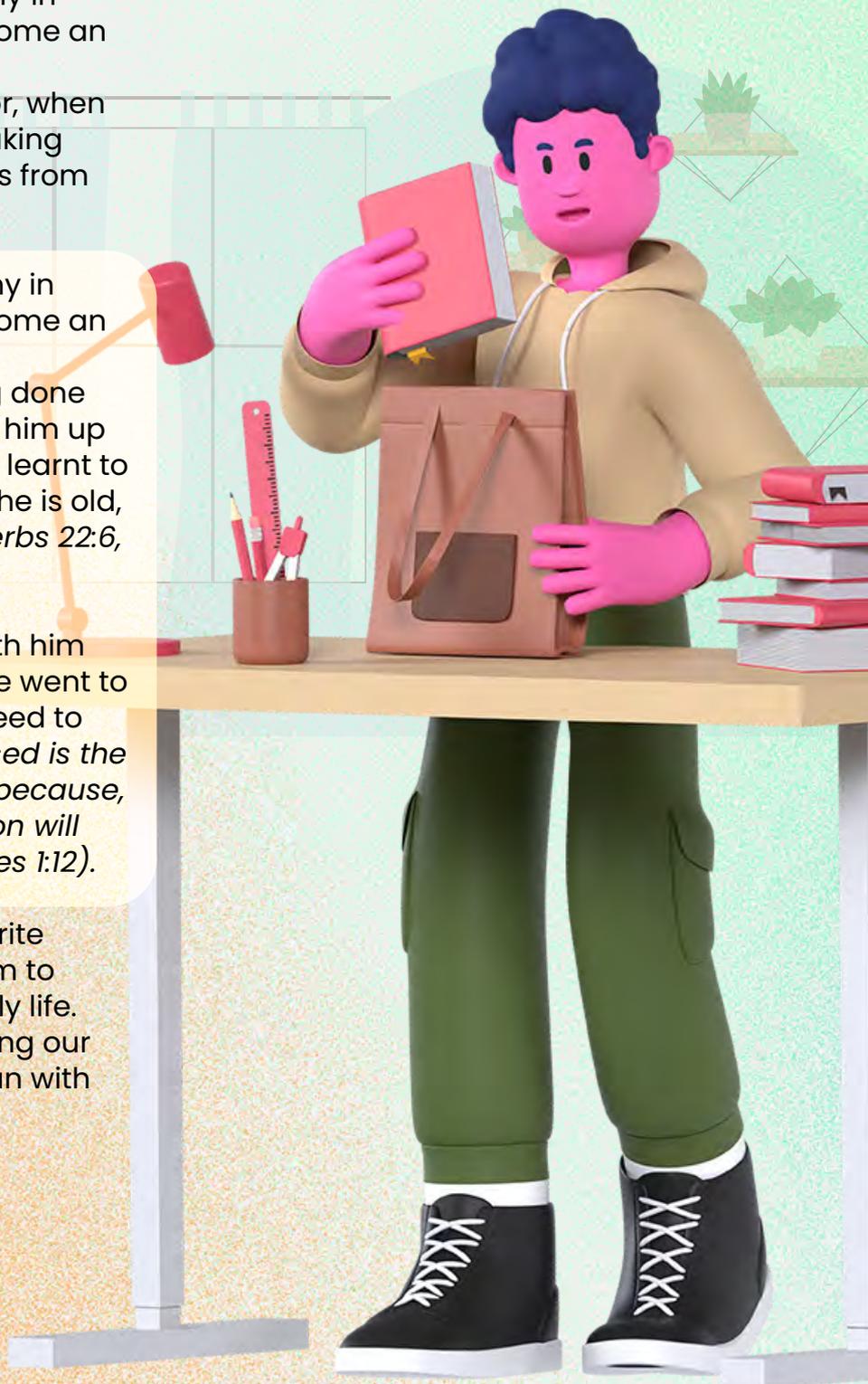
As a parent, it is natural to offer guidance rather than autonomy to our kids. However, I recognise the need to balance guidance and autonomy in order to nurture our child to become an independent and self-sufficient individual. Through trial and error, when he was given more decision-making opportunities, he developed skills from his experiences.

Balance guidance and autonomy in order to nurture our child to become an independent and self-sufficient individual. And over time, having done my best in his childhood to train him up "in the way he should go," I have learnt to let go more, trusting that "when he is old, he will not depart from it." (*Proverbs 22:6, NKJV*)

Sometimes, I tell myself to be with him on his learning journey. Before he went to university, I thought about the need to emphasise self-discipline. "*Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life...*" (*James 1:12*).

So, I invited him to join my favourite sport, which is running, to get him to practise self-discipline in his daily life. He accepted the challenge. During our runs, it was tough at first and I ran with him. Over time, he has come to persevere and in fact, enjoy it.

Throughout my parenting journey, I have made plenty of mistakes. However, I am grateful to God for the lessons learned and the opportunities to grow.



Despite the mix of emotions I feel as our son begins this new chapter, I am amazed at how these mistakes have transformed into blessings.

They have taught me humility, patience, and the importance of embracing imperfection. I have come to realise that it is through these experiences that we learn and become better parents, and become a better person.

Beyond academic performance, it is more fulfilling to see the development of a child's character, values, and integrity. Witnessing our son's growth and seeing him evolve into a responsible, caring,

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and compassionate individual has been, second to the joy of knowing Jesus, our ultimate joy.

May all of us who are parents, understand the mission and responsibility that God has given us to teach and guide our children from our Heavenly Father's perspective. I pray for all fathers around the world that their hearts may turn towards their children, and the hearts of the children may turn towards their fathers (*Malachi 4:6*), embracing this beautiful life together!

Note: This article is published with permission of Our Daily Bread Ministries Malaysia.



Samuel Goh is a graphic designer who gathered his experiences in the advertising and marketing industry and now serves at *Our Daily Bread Ministries*. He finds solace in the pages of books, the rhythm of his feet hitting the pavement, and the strength he gains from running, weightlifting, and "Tang Soo Do" (Korean martial arts). He cherishes the moments shared with his spouse and two wonderful teenage children.



PrayerSpotlight

¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Lord, grant my child strength through Your Holy Spirit so that Christ would dwell in his heart through faith.

Father, please open my child's heart and mind to the depths of your love. Help my child know, without question, that she is loved by You. Give her security and identity rooted in Your unquestionable love. Help me love my child like You do. Lord, whatever my child faces today, be ever present to shape his experience, thoughts, and actions. Fill my child with Your Spirit and give him strength and wisdom to live differently — to live for You."

And I thank You that You can do immeasurably more than all that I ask or think, according to the power that is at work within us. To You be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever.

Prayer for Our Children

based on Ephesians 3:14-19