

克利夫蘭華人教會

Cleveland Chinese Christian Church

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Youth Pastor Letter

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Dear Church Family,

Many of us have high expectations for our children. We want to see them succeed in all areas of life. We put them in music classes, tutoring, and in as many extracurriculars as possible so that they will meet our high expectations and be successful.

High expectations aren't bad things but they can become bad when we dangle them over our children's heads rather than giving them tools to meet them. High expectations become bad when rather than grace, our raising of our children is defined by performance, shame, perfectionism, and our own fears.

Often, our own fears can drive the high expectations of our children. Rather than trusting in God and the grace that is at work in our children's lives, we worry and spend out time loading our children with more and more to do. The good news, the Gospel, isn't about our efforts to reach an impossibly highest standard. Instead, it's about the highest standard already being met for us.

When we embrace the good news of the gospel, We are finally free not to construct our identity or our children's identity around performance. Instead, we free our children so that any obedience, any moves toward goodness and holiness, flow out of being utterly accepted by God. Utterly loved.

Rather than our kids constantly having to pump up an identity constructed around how well they're meeting our standards or their own, daily rising or falling in the courtroom of others' opinions or our own sense of achievement, we can acknowledge that Jesus has already obtained our verdict.

Ask yourself: Is that the message my kids are getting right now, in this moment? Do they know and are they hearing from me that Jesus has reached the highest standard for me and for them?

I think that the answer to raising children isn't always lower expectations. Instead, it's our motivation. Our motivation in raising our children must come from the peace, love and joy of knowing that our acceptance by God has been completely earned by Jesus on our behalf. The truth is that my son nor yours will ever be the kids that we expect them to be and we will never be the parents that we expect ourselves to be. But if we love grace and the gospel, and we point our children to the gospel of Jesus as much as possible, things will be alright.

As always, if you have any questions, comments, or prayer requests, please contact me at jmlilley@clevelandccc.org.

In Christ,
Pastor Jonathan Lilley