



The Changing Face of Parenting

"We're pregnant!" The announcement by this young couple recently made me stop and think. In all my years of pregnancy never had I thought or said that we, as a couple, were pregnant. We were, of course, 'expecting', but only I was pregnant. I have noticed however, that this phrase is very common among the new generation of parents-to-be. It is only a subtle shift in thinking and speech, but it was another reminder of how much parenting has changed over the years, as the world in which we live has changed.



Our eldest son, now 21, grew up on 'wholesome' things such as Play School, lego and fruit. By contrast, our youngest son, almost 5, has a vast array of potential choices before him – a multitude of TV programs, videos and DVD's, an unending selection of toys and games, and a wide assortment of foods to tempt the palate. At one time, to own a 'Game Boy' was considered exciting. Now the average teenager can own thousands of dollars worth of technological equipment without thinking anything of it. The changes in lifestyle have been huge indeed!

How then, do we as parents (or grandparents) respond to these changes? It seems to me that, while much is different, the basic challenge of raising responsible and Godly young men and women of the next generation, still remains. It is still one of the hardest jobs that exist, and yet an incredible privilege. Perhaps one of the challenges for modern-day parents is to take the strengths of childrearing from the past, and re-apply them in new and appropriate ways for today and the future? For example, the relationship building around the kitchen sink while washing up, may now need to be found in other ways in our dishwasher world. The fundamental principles of parenting will not change, but the way these are expressed may look very different. How will you hold on to the worthwhile past, while shaping the future?

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