

Going to be a father. Resources?

21 upvotes | 14 May, 2019 | by OsmiumZulu

Hey gents,

My wife is pregnant and we are joyfully expecting a son this coming fall. The secular RP community tends to fall somewhere between indifferent and hostile towards children, consequently there is a relative lack of advise and resources for fathers. That said, what advise, tips, or resources do the fathers here in RPC have? General advise is certainly welcome, though any material specific to raising boys is most relevant.

Specific to my situation, due to the way my family is spread out, I have never really had the opportunity to spend much time around newborns or infants. Caring for that age group is entirely outside my experience and I would like to get a good handle on the basics before game-day.

Thanks in advance.

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Comments

redwall92 • 11 points • 14 May, 2019 07:46 PM

I don't think the secular RP community is hostile towards children or even indifferent. Most men just don't know how to make decisions in their own home, so life just plain sucks for the man, the wife, and the kids. Crap rolls down hill. And a wife and a child both know how to raise a stink when the captain isn't leading well.

I think the main thrust of RP remains the same when dealing with a wife, a child, a church-mate, a co-worker, etc, etc.

You do you.

Just like you can't own your wife's emotions, don't own your kids emotions.

You want to live a happy life? Then do it. Kids (and wife) are welcome to come along. As they get older, they'll probably think about not coming along from time to time. Let them think that if they want. Don't break frame just to make kids happy. But don't let your ego get in the way when you muck something up.

You've got a bigger crew now. You should be focusing on your mission while giving your crew an age-appropriate vision for them to have a part. Kids want to be a part of something bigger than their own problems. Your job is to be doing something bigger than the latest Xbox game. They'll want to play in your life as long as you're not a hard-butt downer in their life.

redwall92 • 3 points • 14 May, 2019 07:46 PM

And congrats, man!!

OsmiumZulu[S] • 2 points • 14 May, 2019 09:00 PM

Thank you, and thanks for the advice. Lots to consider.

g_e_m_anscombe • 7 points • 14 May, 2019 08:51 PM*

Read *The Vanishing American Adult* by Ben Sasse.

Pregnancy is a weird thing. Mothers have and develop intuitions. You don't have to respect everything a mother thinks is right, but if you've done a good job picking a wife you can err on the side of trusting her.

Hire a doula. They are worth every penny. The pregnancy medical-industrial-complex has stripped women of agency and removed the sources of feminine knowledge to be inaccessible to women. My husband said reading *The Birth Partner* was helpful.

Continue to work on owning your stuff. Babies throw all of life into chaos. Be patient with your wife as she works out routines, and give her space as she figures things out. Encourage her to keep trying as she encounters the challenges of breastfeeding. Don't try to save her - just try to help her, if that makes sense. And don't feel guilty for saying no if something's not working. That's a sign you need to build a different system. As best you can, protect one another's sleep. That can look different in many ways (some sleep train, we cosleep in shifts) but sleep is foundational to all the rest.

And pray. Ask God for guidance when things are unclear and for patience when things are hard. Ask God for mercy when you just can't muster the extra strength to do x. Ask God for strength when you know you must do y. Children seem to be a tool to help us learn to pray without ceasing.

OsmiumZulu[S] • 2 points • 14 May, 2019 08:59 PM

Thanks for the recco. I'll check it out.

Hannelore010 • 1 point • 27 May, 2019 12:55 AM

I'm a mother to 9 and this is all good advice

Stackerjam • 5 points • 15 May, 2019 02:59 AM

No one is fully prepared for an infant but the advice given so far is good. Here's my five bobs worth: 1) As already stated by the guys, keep working on yourself as a man and leader of your family. If you lead and your wife follows guess what? The kids will fall into line. If you and your wife have differing agendas the kids will pick up on this. 2) Be involved and active with your child from day one. This may mean adjusting your work hours or hobbies to the new family member. Use your judgment. 3) Do not, and I repeat, do not shy away from discipline as they get older. This is a tough one for many guys raised in a new age pansy world but discipline is vital and it comes in many different forms and methods. You'll discover when to start using it. Mainly when they discover they can make decisions. Be consistent, be fair but firm and clear. Try not to lose your cool - maintain frame. Don't be afraid to be the bad guy/bad cop. 4) Discipline is useless if the home and family is not a loving, supportive and fun environment. See point 1 for a starting reference. 5) Have regular meals together. 6) Do fun stuff as much as possible - after dinner, on weekends. 7) Set a clear bed time routine - bath, dressing, teeth, story, prayer, discussion about their day. 8) Fully embrace the awesome power of wrestle time with dad! I LOVED this time with my kids and we still laugh about the things that happened during these nightly rough ups. This applies to boys and girls. 9) Be active in the sports or hobbies they choose. You can teach them a tonne of stuff by what they experience in these activities ie work hard, play hard, respect the ref, learn to lose, learn to fight through pain and discomfort, deal with idiot team members etc.

If I think of some more I'll post later.

OsmiumZulu[S] • 1 point • 18 May, 2019 09:10 PM

Helpful stuff. Thanks for taking the time to put that list together.

Be involved and active with your child from day one. This may mean adjusting your work hours or hobbies to the new family member. Use your judgment.

I've been working on this one recently, my line of work has highly demanding and irregular hours. To provide a stable consistent home I will likely be changing careers when I find something suitable.

Do not, and I repeat, do not shy away from discipline as they get older. This is a tough one for many guys raised in a new age pansy world

Fortunately both our parents were old school on discipline. I got some well deserved whoopings at times and have since thanked them for it.

mwggw • 4 points • 14 May, 2019 09:16 PM

Congrats! The first few years of raising a child have been simultaneously the most difficult and most joyful years of my life. It's similar to marriage- it pushes on you and can be very challenging, but it also becomes evident that this is God's design.

The most helpful book I read was called "The Birth Partner" by Penny Simkin. She comes from a very naturalistic approach which I didn't fully buy into, but her explanations of how everything works is incredibly well done. And she balances the "all natural" approach with a more medical approach very well too- I felt the book helped me gain a pretty balanced view.

For me, reading up and being knowledgeable was very important in maintaining frame with my wife. I wanted to be able to calm her fears with some authority, and also have a knowledgeable voice when making decisions and discussing options. Obviously I wasn't a tyrant about it and we went with her preferences on pretty much everything, but I wasn't just sitting on the sidelines while she managed everything. That made a huge difference in her not feeling alone.

OsmiumZulu[S] • 2 points • 14 May, 2019 09:34 PM

Awesome, great recommendation. I'll add it to my list.

Your points on maintaining frame by having knowledge ahead of time is exactly when I posted this, I am sure it will make a big difference.

SteelSharpensSteel • 5 points • 15 May, 2019 12:27 AM

Be prepared to never sleep again. Good times, and congrats!

SeamusAwl • 2 points • 15 May, 2019 09:25 PM

Not true. My 2nd child slept through the night all the time. My wife says otherwise, but I know she is full of it. I got plenty of sleep.

SteelSharpensSteel • 2 points • 16 May, 2019 12:08 AM

Har har.

OsmiumZulu[S] • 1 point • 18 May, 2019 09:11 PM

Thanks!

Fortunately I have always had fairly minimal sleep needs. Nonetheless, I am already trying not to take a full night's rest for granted haha

SeamusAwl • 5 points • 15 May, 2019 05:46 PM

I have some simple advice....

- 1). God has gifted you with an incredible responsibility. But sooo worth it.
- 2). The infant and toddler years are the mother's to cherish. Yet you should take time alone with your son and have him rest on your bare chest. It is a critical bonding time for you with your child, and gives mom a break.
- 3). The rambunctious 3-7 years. These are all yours. Its serious play time. For me and mine it was lots of tickling, racing eachother with fake injuries, and general goofing off with them.
- 4). The remaining time is spent being present in their lives.

But the whole time, they are like little velociraptors. Constantly testing the boundaries. You need to hold those boundaries whenever they test them and relax them when you feel its time. Its how they know they are loved.

Aside from that, broken record everything you tell them:

Kid: Can I have/do X?

Me: No!

Kid: Why not?

Me: Because I said no.

Kid: yes, but why?

Me: Because No came out of my mouth.

Also:

Kid: Can I get/do X?

Me: Did you clean your room?

Kid: no, but I would....

Me: (interrupting) So you are cleaning your room.

Kid: i will, but first...

Me: (again interrupting) is your room clean?

These are actual exchanges i have with my daughters. If it doesnt get old for them, it doesnt get old for me.

SeamusAwl • 4 points • 15 May, 2019 05:49 PM

A final note.

When you come home and they beat the dog to the door to give you a hug. Hold it until they let go first and cherish that moment the most. My 10 year old still beats the dog and nothing that happened at work matters anymore cuz Daddy's Home.

OsmiumZulu[S] • 2 points • 18 May, 2019 09:06 PM

That's awesome, I look forward to it.

I appreciate the outline of what to expect throughout their early life.

But the whole time, they are like little velociraptors. Constantly testing the boundaries.

Given my personality and line of work this is actually one of the parts I actually feel most prepared for. Helping my wife maintain the boundaries may take a bit of effort at first; she is a pleaser and sometimes has a hard time saying no. She's gotten much better at it over the years but I have a hunch it will be more challenging to say no to our kids than a relative stranger.

Red-Curious • 3 points • 17 May, 2019 03:35 PM

Late to the party on this post, but here's what I came up with when in your shoes.

The Purpose of Parenting

You can't measure your success as a parent if you don't know what your goals are as a parent. These goals are neither overly broad ("I want him to grow up to be a godly man") or overly specific ("I want him to be a cardiovascular surgeon by the age of 35"). They are informed by the way God has parented us.

The world will tell you that the goal of parenting is simply to have an emotionally positive relationship with your children. If they walk out the door at the age of 18 knowing that you love them and are proud of them - no matter whether they deserve it or not, then you will have succeeded. This is total garbage. I study child psychology literally every single week and review the research. It's part of my job in knowing how to approach custody cases. The evidence is just not there. It sounds good to emotionalist liberals, but there are countless people who felt loved by their parents who still wound up leading very unsuccessful, unfulfilled lives, struggling with depression, loneliness, unable to connect in a community, lacking meaningful romantic relationships, etc.

God does not tell us that a person is mature when they feel loved by him. Rather, he says through Paul: "Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have already attained. Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us" (Phil. 3:15-17).

That is, maturity comes from learning how to live in the example of our parents - and it is made complete when

we no longer need our parents, though we may certainly still want them around. I don't take this to mean every single detail of our lives, just as Jesus doesn't compel all men to take up carpentry as their career. But it does mean that maturity comes from developing the same driving force in our life as our parents, which Paul explains in the preceding verse: "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." That is where spiritual maturity comes from - when we can emulate this "straining forward to what lies ahead" (v14) and an orientation toward achieving clear life goals. The same should be true of earthly maturity: that our children recognize their parents' goals and are able to strive to achieve the mission set out for the - which only works productively if we get our goals from God.

While I don't know much about what he teaches generally, I did read a book on parenting by Chip Ingram. The entire foundation of his book was that the primary purpose of parenting is to teach children how to obey. If they can learn to obey you, they can learn to obey God. I find it hard to argue with that conclusion - especially given all the talking I do about the parallel between the tangible and the spiritual. Just as tangible parenting helps us understand spiritual parenting with those we disciple, so also does *being parented* for a child by their physical father help them understand how to be spiritually parented by their Father.

In short, my goal as a parent is to teach my children how to obey and to give them a purpose bigger than their own self-interests that they can pursue, which will make a difference for eternity - a purpose that my Father passed down to me through my physical parents and through the man who God used to give me spiritual life.

Get on board with a purpose for your parenting and orient everything around that. As always: **Mission matters, nothing else.**

Methodology

With my stated goal above, how do I go about accomplishing this? Here are some practical tips that will mostly apply over a long period of time, and not necessarily during the first year of your child's life.

First, Kids are born believing that they are the center of the universe. They're not. Have your own agenda and let them know consistently: "You are important to me, but you're not *the most important thing* to me, and I do not orient my life around you."

Second, boys in particular get stifled enough by society as-is. They have ambitions and desires and crazy ideas that are totally risky and unsafe. Everyone tells them they shouldn't be this way and that they should just chill out and avoid these adventurous pursuits. This is how boys become feminized. Learning to obey the word "no" is crucial to a boy, but it must also be well-placed. If you can waken his adventurous spirit by finding a way to say "yes," then do it. For example: my son wanted to play with a hammer once. My wife immediately said no. It's really dangerous. He could break himself or something else. Makes sense, right? Don't let kids play with grown-up tools. Screw that. "Yes, you can play with the hammer - just wait until I can do it with you." See how easy that is? Adventurous spirit alive, appropriate cautions taken.

Third, do things WITH your children, not just FOR them or merely telling them what to do or how to do it. I defer back to 208 as the simplified methodology of disciple-making I see in Jesus life:

Tell them what. Verbally explain to your children who you are and what you expect of them - both in the moment and on broader life goals. This is only the first step because it's probably the least important of all of them.

Show them how. Actually do things in front of them or show them through guided motions. A classic example is when the guy wraps his arms around a girl to show her how to swing a baseball bat. For my kids, when teaching them how to walk, I'd physically grab their legs and move them in walking motions so they would start to learn. When playing tether ball with my son, I show him how to hit the ball at the right angles to go over the other kids' heads by doing it in front of him.

Let them try. Once you've shown them, give them a chance. With the tether ball example, he used to want to hit the ball up to go over someone's head. Makes sense to a kid: hit it up to make it go up. After telling him how tension on the rope will cause the ball to swing up if you hit it down, then showing him how it worked, suddenly he understood it and was able to hit the ball effectively on his own.

Send them out. After they're competent doing something, you can stop supervising. They should be able to function on their own. My son can go play tether ball with other kids on the playground and employ the strategies I taught him even without me being there to remind him.

Pass it on. As a person begins to excel at something, others start to follow them and want to learn from them. My 7yr old son got really good at folding paper into boomerangs and ninja throwing stars. He gets so excited to show me the new ones he makes after school. Other kids saw him doing it and wanted to learn, so now he's teaching other kids how to do it too. This is beautiful. I didn't have to arrange for this - but there are many things where I do have to be intentional about ensuring my son passes on the things I've taught him to other people. "Do you have any friends who don't know Jesus? Wouldn't it be great if they loved Jesus too? Wouldn't it be cool if you got to be the one to show them how to be like Jesus?"

Fourth, when in doubt, look to how the Father parented humanity. I used to be harsh against legalists. I now understand the value in it - especially as a parent. In humanity's early days, God crafted a covenant of legalism: follow my commands and I'll bless you. Paul later reveals that God never intended legalism, but that humanity without the Spirit and absent the cross was too blind to understand the full picture of God's relationship with his people. My kids are too young to grasp the way I want to relate with them. So, I have to use clear rules and boundaries to create a safe context for them to be able to love and relate with me appropriately. They don't understand why they must clean their room - only that they must do it. As much as I can explain that it's character-building to let them take responsibility for a small domain I've given them, they just can't grasp that concept intellectually yet. So, the law it is. As they mature, my 7yr old son can now understand bits and pieces of the reason behind the rules I place - that the rules are there both for his benefit and my good pleasure. To that end, embrace the fact that legalism, while not an end-goal or even a present interest, is still a practically valuable tool for parenting purposes.

Fifth, controlled emotional expression can be very valuable. I firmly believe that we, as humans, do not have the capacity to infuriate God. He does not emotionally react to us, as if I could flip off the sky and somehow he'd get all fiery-eyed. Yet we see examples of God becoming angry at human behavior all the time. Is God losing frame when this happens? I never understood this until I became a parent. This happens about every other night. My kids are sent to bed, but keep getting out of bed. It's usually for stupid stuff like, "I bumped my hand on the wall. Can I get a bandaid?" No, you cannot have a bandaid if you're not bleeding. It's silly kid stuff. Sometimes my wife and I just laugh - amused mastery. But I'm not trying to get my kids sexually attracted to me; I'm trying to get them to obey me. So, amused mastery isn't always the best strategy at developing obedience. Know what is? Daddy gives a stern look and starts walking slowly toward them. They think, "I made Daddy mad! I better get back into bed before he spansks me!" Was I actually mad? No. But I certainly needed to show them that side of me so they can develop a healthy fear that leads to obedience - and then I am well pleased with them when they stay in bed after that.

And I'm out of room ...

OsmiumZulu[S] • 3 points • 18 May, 2019 08:55 PM

Thanks for this RC, definitely some good stuff to mull over and consider.

Second, boys in particular get stifled enough by society as-is. They have ambitions and desires and crazy ideas that are totally risky and unsafe. Everyone tells them they shouldn't be this way and that they

should just chill out and avoid these adventurous pursuits. This is how boys become feminized. Learning to obey the word "no" is crucial to a boy, but it must also be well-placed. If you can waken his adventurous spirit by finding a way to say "yes," then do it.

This part especially stood out to me. Trying to find a way to "Yes" without endangering them seems a great way to not only not stifle the boldness in a young boy, but to encourage it. Good stuff.

chuckus_mangionus • 2 points • 15 May, 2019 02:29 PM

Family Life by Kevin Swanson

OsmiumZulu[S] • 1 point • 18 May, 2019 09:03 PM

Family Life by Kevin Swanson

I appreciate the recommendation. I took a look into Kevin Swanson and appreciate that he is a confessional believer. I have a few points of contention with the WSC but on the whole it is a great foundation. I added it to my list.

becoming_alpha • 2 points • 15 May, 2019 05:24 PM

You're going to need lots of patience, and having a baby in the house will change the dynamic in your house. Your baby will be adorable, and you'll love him. He'll also drive you crazy being up at all hours. Your wife will have a normal motherly biological urge to care for that baby at all costs. You and your needs and wants will be further down her priorities. This will test your frame, especially the first 6 months. It would be easy to go blue and be butthurt and resentful in this scenario (ask me how I know).

Be a great dad, be involved, take baby and go do something because you want to and because your wife needs a break too. Keep living your awesome life. Keep eating right, lifting, and sleeping (the best you can). Keep leading the family. Someone mentioned your wife's intuition, and that'll be there and it would be wise of you to defer to her on many baby-related things. But you're still the captain of the ship, don't hand over the wheel because your wife is more emotional and more attached to the baby. That will just lead to resentment from her of having to steer the ship while being primarily responsible for the baby as well.

Lucky for you, you're RP aware (something I wasn't when I had infants), and I'm sure you'll handle it better than I did. This will be a challenging and rewarding time in your life, I'm happy for you.

SingularityOne198 • 2 points • 15 May, 2019 06:35 PM*

<http://modeoflife.org/st-porphyrrios-about-parental-education-and-upbringing/>

Best advice on parenthood that I've read so far.

OsmiumZulu[S] • 1 point • 16 May, 2019 01:06 AM

Interesting read. Thanks for sharing.

SingularityOne198 • 2 points • 16 May, 2019 02:47 AM

You're welcome. May God bless you with strength and fortitude!

RedPillCoach • 1 point • 15 May, 2019 03:58 PM

Welcome to the next level. I see that "what to expect when your expecting" still tops the charts for understanding the pregnant wife. Next you will want to read up on developmental milestones.

There are several recent books on raising boys although they tend to be more sociological than practical: "The boy crisis" by Warren Farrell is a noted exception and is must reading for any father of boys.

Then read "the first year of life" to become an expert on, well, the first year of life.

basics before game-day.

Like changing a diaper? Practice with a doll? It is seriously not that hard. Watch a youtube video on it.

Like holding the thing? Lots of men with no experience holding a baby are terrified at the thought. Don't worry. I know it is a cliché but it is different with yours. Love is greater than fear, anxiety, and terror. Love never fails.

OsmiumZulu[S] • 1 point • 18 May, 2019 09:00 PM

Welcome to the next level.

Thanks, I'm excited to take on the next level of hard mode.

"The boy crisis" by Warren Farrell is a noted exception and is must reading for any father of boys.

Thanks for the recommendation, I just ordered it for Kindle.

Willow-girl • 1 point • 15 May, 2019 05:30 AM

I got nothin' for ya here (childfree, lol) but would like to say CONGRATULATIONS!

OsmiumZulu[S] • 1 point • 18 May, 2019 08:56 PM

Thanks! We are stoked to become parents.

Willow-girl • 1 point • 18 May, 2019 09:10 PM

Barking mad, you are. :-)

OsmiumZulu[S] • 1 point • 18 May, 2019 09:12 PM

You don't even know the half of it lol

Willow-girl • 1 point • 18 May, 2019 09:19 PM

:-)