

My name is Ben and I have two daughters, Lilah and Esmae. And I remember so vividly the day we brought our first child, Lilah, home from the hospital. I looked at my wife Holly and said, "That was great...what do we do with her now?"

It seemed insane to me that the doctors and nurses would allow Holly and I to be in charge of this person—this *human's*—life, indefinitely. I think the best word to describe my first impression of parenting would be *overwhelming*. I'm overwhelmed with love. Overwhelmed with responsibility. Overwhelmed with exhaustion. Overwhelmed with Google searches: "how to swaddle," "how to put a baby in a doorway jumper without regretting it forever." Or maybe that was just me.

Yes, parenting is overwhelming. Some of us deal with that in different ways. We read books. We ask for the advice of a professional. We reach out to friends or family members who are a little bit down the road from us. We read online forums—not a good idea, by the way. At one point I got so desperate that I got on Pinterest!

There is *plenty* of advice out there. But then even *that* can be overwhelming, right? I mean, the sheer volume of ideas, theories, and guidelines is enough to make you want to quit before you even start.

Listen, I've been there. Every parent has been there. But I want to give you one thing to focus on—one thing to think about when it comes to raising your children. And if you can get this concept, we think it will narrow the scope of your focus—and maybe, over time—ease some of the overwhelming feelings we all deal with.

In Deuteronomy 6:5-7, Moses gave some parenting advice. Here's what he said: " Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with

all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”

Moses doesn't begin a debate on whether or not you should let your child cry it out at night. He doesn't talk about pacifiers, baby sign language, or how much television kids should watch. No. Moses tells the people that the most important thing they can pass along to their child is a love and knowledge of their heavenly Father.

And we think—that's so obvious. Of course I'm going to pass *that* on. But it's easy to get caught up in all the day-to-day tasks involved with parenting and lose sight of this simple truth—outside of them knowing they are loved, *nothing is more important than your child's faith*. Nothing is more important than living a life that shows your child that their heavenly father created them, loves them, and desperately wants a relationship with them.

So instead of asking yourself what you want your child to do, what if you asked yourself, who do I want my child to *be*?

There was a season of my life when I used to go running with my brother-in-law, Tim. To Tim, running is easy and fun. To me, running is terrible and hard. He's one of those guys who can carry on effortless conversations while he runs. I, on the other hand, like to do things like gasp for air, grunt, and cry. One day, while I was complaining to Tim that I couldn't go any further, he told me to look up and find a landmark way off in the distance. He said, “Just focus on making it *there*.” Focusing on that spot didn't put more oxygen in my lungs. But it did help me push through because I kept the destination in focus.

We want to help you do that—help you choose a spot in the horizon to focus on. At the end of this video, we'd love for you to sit down and write a description of the type of person you'd like your child to grow up to be.

Do you want your child to be forgiving? Do you want your child to be generous? A good friend? A hard worker? Compassionate? Determined? Loyal? Choose 3-5 words. Now, you'll share these during the baby dedication event, so make sure you write it out.

Now, some of you are going to look at this list and start getting overwhelmed all over again. You're thinking, I'm just trying to get my kid to sleep longer than three hours a night or eat more than marshmallows for dinner, and you want me to focus on teaching them how to be *compassionate*? No. That's not what this list is. This list is your ultimate destination. Let your periphery take care of the little things, but let this list navigate the big moments, the big decisions.

Right now is important. The crazy, overwhelming moments along the way are important. But while you're surviving those, keep a bigger picture in your mind: the *person* that your amazing son or daughter can become.