

I Turned out Okay

“My parents didn’t do all this stuff, and I turned out okay. Why can’t I just parent like my parents did?”

We’ve heard this reasoning too many times. Going to church, faithful discipline, reading the Bible, screening books, memorization, home school, limited television, and the list goes on—it all adds up to a philosophy of child raising that is dramatically different than our own upbringings. And yet, here we are: God lovers, church attendees, well-rounded citizens. If we turned out okay, why not just do what our parents did?



I guess that raises a few questions.

Are you sure you turned out okay? No offense intended. I mean that when you were 18 or so, were you making good decisions? God-focused? Equipped with the self control necessary to study, spend wisely, and be abstinent? Did you keep going to church when you left the house? Did you have a vibrant relationship with God? Were you a loving person? A giver instead of a taker? Needed or needy? A servant or a servee?

And even if you turned out okay, did your siblings turn out well? Maybe you turned out okay, but what about your brothers and sisters? How would you answer the above questions in relation to them? Is your okayness a product of your upbringing, or did everything just happen to work out fine?

Is “okay” the goal we are aiming for with our parenting efforts? I hope my kids turn out okay, but okay is not what I’m shooting for. I’d rather aim for “exemplary” and miss and hit “okay”, than aim for “okay” and hit “less than okay”. Honestly, I am parenting to truly equip my kid to avoid some of the struggles we had and mistakes we made. Realistically, that takes a different kind of parenting.

We also need to take a minute and carefully assess the world we are trying to raise our kids in. This world is not the same world we grew up in. When I grew up I did not have electronic pornography sitting on my desk 24-7. Although it was around, I was hardly ever offered drugs or alcohol. No one ever sent out nude pictures on their cell phone (which would have been the size of a toaster). My principal wasn’t gay, my fellow students did not bring their babies to the school day care, and presidents always seemed like fairly upright people. Most kids did not have TV’s in their rooms, and those that did were not exposed to ‘round the clock sex and violence. In school we actually learned stuff. In church the messages were filtered by “what is true” instead of “what is winsome”. The school even honored Wednesday as “church night”.

I am not equipping my kids for the world from which I came and turned out okay. I am equipping them for a new world of temptations and trials.