

Family Matters

Part 12

By Dale Payne

Teaching Children Diligently To Develop A Heart For God

*“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger,
but bring them up in the discipline and **instruction of the Lord.**”*

Ephesians 6:4

I will call it the **Third Chair Phenomena**. The **first chair** was the first generation of Israel that came out of Egypt with Moses (*Exodus & Numbers*). They saw the 10 Plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, Mt. Sinai and the 10 Commandments, the presence of God in the pillar of fire and smoke, and the Tabernacle. They experienced God’s provision of food (manna and quail) (*Ex. 16:35; Josh. 5:12; Neh. 9:15*) and water in the desert for two million+ desperately dependent souls, whose clothes and shoes didn’t wear out (*Deut. 2:7; 8:4; 29:5; Neh. 9:21*) and did not experience the diseases of Egypt (*Ex. 15:26*). They were given the promise of a land flowing with milk and honey (*Jer. 32:22*), but when they came right up to it, they didn’t believe God could do what He promised (*Numb. 14; Deut. 1:26*) and instead they acted in unbelief and were cursed to wander for 40 years (*Numb. 32:13; Deut. 1:2,35*) and eventually die in the wilderness. They experienced the closeness of God and saw the miraculous, yet because of their sin of unbelief (*Heb. 3:9*), they failed to enter the land.

The **second chair** is the second generation who grew up in the wilderness (*Numb. 14:33*) and were instructed about God’s works and the promise, but they personally only heard about it from a distance through their parents without personally experiencing it fully themselves. Moses in *Deuteronomy* preached to this generation to not follow the ways of their parents (*Deut. 5:3*) and not to forget God (*Deut. 4:9,23*), but challenged them to teach their children diligently the things of the LORD (*Deut. 6 & 8*). Moses gave them specific instructions as parents what to pass on to their kids, both blessings and curses, for obedience or disobedience, life or death. Joshua led them into the Promise Land in a victorious conquest. They received everything God promised, wells they did not dig, houses they did not build, vineyards and fruit trees they did not plant – everything they were hoping for, on the condition they not forget God or chase after the idolatry and practices of the surrounding pagan nations. Somewhere between their heart, head, and hands, they forgot. In *Judges 2:2* God said to these parents, *“Make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land, you shall tear down their altars... but you have not obeyed Me, what is this you have done? I will not drive them out before you, but they will become as thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you.”*

The **third chair** is the next generation after Joshua. *Judges 2:10* says, “All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel.” They were the generation who neither saw it with their parents, nor heard it from their parents, but you can bet what they did see in their parent’s lives was completely contrary to what they might have originally heard. *Judges 2:11-19* says, “Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers... and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them... thus they provoked the LORD to anger. They did not listen to their judges for they played the harlot after other gods... and turned aside quickly... they did not abandon their practices or their stubborn ways...” Verse 17 says, “They did not do as their fathers...” Generation 2 may have had some resemblance to faithfulness to God, but it was lost in their pursuit of success and wealth, and the children of Generation 3 went off the cliff. Something major got dropped between each generation, but Generation 3 is truly a sad saga. We will call this **Generation Decline**, because Israel failed to pass their faith on to their children. They knew what to say and what to do, but did not do it.

There are biblical bad examples of dropping the baton throughout Scripture. What happened to Samuel the prophet’s boys? Samuel was a great prophet, “*but his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice*” (1 Samuel 8:3). What happened to Hezekiah’s son Manasseh? It was said of Hezekiah, “*There was no king like him... he held fast to the LORD... and kept the commands... The LORD was with him... He was successful...*” But of Manasseh, (a teenage king) it was said, “*He followed the detestable practices of the nations... worshiped the stars... sacrificed his son in the fire, practiced sorcery, and did much evil in the eyes of the LORD provoking him to anger*” (2 Kings 18:3-7; 21:6; 2 Chronicles 29-33). What happened to Josiah’s sons, Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim? It was said of Josiah, “*Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the Lord as he did with all his heart... in accordance with all the Law of Moses.*” But of his son Jehoahaz, “*He did evil in the sight of the LORD (he reigned only 3 months)*” (2 Kings 23:25, 32; 2 Chronicles 34-36). What happened to Jehoshaphat’s son Jehoram? Jehoshaphat was known for seeking the Lord, being obedient, and following his grandpa David’s example. But his son Jehoram, “*did evil in the sight of the Lord*” (2 Chronicles 17:3,4; 2 Kings 8:16-18). What happened to Jotham’s son Ahaz? Jotham it was said, did what was right in God’s sight. But his son Ahaz followed the “*detestable ways of the nations the LORD had driven out...*” (2 Chronicles 27 & 28).

What was missing in their parenting? What hindered their sons and daughters from having the same vibrant faith of their fathers? With each story comes the truth that even though their fathers had faith, there was “*sin in the camp.*” The Bible is not absolutely clear who was responsible for children who did not follow in their parent’s faith, however, in many of these examples, the Bible did mention the parent’s failures (“*like mother, like daughter*”). As I have said already, each person is responsible for their own sin (*Deut. 24:16; Ezek. 18:4,20*)

and their response to God's truth revealed. No debate there. But ultimately, parents are the greatest spiritual influence in their children's lives. We are their primary teachers. We reflect God to them. We model the gospel in our parenting. We need to build spiritual sensitivity in our children that moves them (through the Holy Spirit's work) toward genuine faith in Christ which produces real spiritual fruit, even in spite of us. God will hold us responsible for the short time we have with them in our home. So... how do we teach and train our children effectively?

Instructing A Child's Heart:

"Teaching" (Gk. *"didaskalia"*) ("*instruction*" Gk. *"nouthesia"* – "*admonish*" Gk. *"noutheteo"* – "*exhort*" Gk. *"parakaleo"*) means to **cause a child to know** by imparting truth (what is *said* to the child). We teach knowledge of certain facts. Teaching enhances the mind and thought process. Yet, instruction is much more than telling our children how to think, or what to do or say. Our goal is to admonish and make a deeper impression on their heart. We help our children understand how those facts relate to reality. Ultimately, we impart Biblical wisdom to be applied directly to real life. We invest our life in our children and teach them the purpose and meaning of life. The heart is the center of one's being (mind, will, emotions, attitudes, motives- *Prov. 4:23*). Our true character is defined by what we think, because how we think is how we eventually act. "*Watch your life and your doctrine closely.*" (*1 Tim. 4:16 NIV*)

"Training" ("*discipline*" Gk. *"paideia"*) is **causing a child to do** something (what is done to and with the child). It is more than general education. Training involves all aspects of a child's life – correction (Gk. *"epanorthoso"* or *"epanorthosis"*), reproof (Gk. *"elegmos"* or *"elegcho"*), rebuke (Gk. *"epitimaio"* or *"elegcho"*), the development of godly character, shaping good habits, molding right behavior, practicing appropriate attitudes, strengthening good desires, resisting the bad, and building lifelong healthy skills. Training is discipline with teeth. It should accomplish its desired goal, and it comes with a lot of sweat ("*discipline*" – Gk. *"gymnazo"* or *"gymnasia"* – *English: gymnasium*). Training ultimately is Biblically striving to shape inner heart convictions.

Which comes first – teaching or training? Can you have one without the other? How do they relate to each other? How do these both change with the developmental stages in children? *Proverbs 29:15* says, "*The rod (discipline/training) and reproof (instruction/teaching) give wisdom.*" Both are vital in raising children Biblically.

Some would say that training begins long before formal teaching occurs and it starts at birth. However, I believe that they both go hand in hand, just at different levels, depending on the age of the child. Even before birth, a child hears their parent's voice in the womb (*Lk. 1:41*). When a child is born, they already recognize the gentle voice of their parents. When a child is an infant, a parent speaks into their child's life when they use words that have

meaning, words that are directed toward the child. The child takes it all in on his hard drive. He may not respond in kind, but he is listening and associating words with meaning. He smiles when we smile. If we are displaying an angry temperament, he reacts in similar fashion. He is watching everything we do and say. He is recording in full, all our deleted scenes.

We begin training a child as we develop their schedule, their menu, and their physical care. We condition them to what is acceptable and not acceptable behavior, and assign moral judgment (“No! Don’t touch... that is harmful for you...”). As they begin to express their will, we begin to train them toward what we believe biblically is right and good. They begin to watch us intently and we are training them with our reactions, tone of voice, non-verbal responses, choice of words – all again going directly to their hard drive. They are capable of learning multiple languages even before they can speak. Children can be trained in almost any direction – for good or bad. Parents must train their children what ought to be done, and when they ought to do it, whether they want to do it or not, and even when the parent may not want to train them. That is the challenge of parenting. We cannot lose heart. *Galatians 6:9* says, “Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.” We are training and teaching them continuously, initially just through visual and auditory means. This places a huge responsibility on us as parents to model godly lives before our kids every day, all day, from the day they are born to the day they leave our home and beyond.

H. Clay Trumbull in his book, Hints On Child Training, brought out several ways parents should train their children. Training a child’s appetite is vital, even at an early age. We need to train them to eat what is good for them and what they ought to eat, instead of indulging their personal whims in the eating line, especially things that are laced with sugar. This will train their desires, stomach, and develop their character. The more certain peculiarities are indulged, the stronger becomes their hold on the child. We had a rule in our home that we all eat the same food when it was served, even if it was not preferred. Even at an early age, we weaned them off baby-food and ground up in soft palatable bites what the rest of us were eating that meal. I fully understand we each have our own inherit likes and dislikes, but mom is not our special-order cook. In doing so, our children learned to eat their fruits & vegetables, and develop a thankful heart for good food (*Mk. 7:9; 1 Tim. 4:3-5*). If a child refused to eat what everyone else was eating, they could pass on the meal (without snacking options), but they would see it again the next meal reheated. Their hunger usually changed their heart and stomach to be willing to eat whatever was served to them (within reason). My wife tried in her preparation to take into account certain foods that the kids disliked, but as a whole my kids have very little they will not eat. Certain favorites are seen often. As our children became adults, we did allow them to choose not to eat certain foods, but they were willing to do so if asked. We also trained them to cook early so they understood the work necessary to prepare a good meal for the family. They didn’t just cook for their taste buds but preferred the whole. There are many times in life where we must learn to adapt to things we do not prefer, because

it may be served at a friend or relative's home we do not want to offend, or in a foreign country where we have no other options. Children need to be trained to be rulers of their appetite instead of being its slaves. It is a parent's responsibility to decide what the child shall eat or not eat, especially in the early years, just as it is for the parent to decide what the child shall wear or not wear. Are we more concerned with what they put on the outside, than what they put on the inside?

We need to train our children in use of their speech and how to ask good questions. Questioning is an expression of mental appetite. We should train them in the right timing when questions are appropriate (at dinner time, at bed time) and when it is not appropriate (when mom and dad are having a serious conversation, when a guest is present, when mom is on the phone, or after lights are out). We can train them as to the content of their questions, whether they are truly seeking wisdom, or just being silly. Get used to a child asking "why"? (By the way, Job asked God "why" many times as he was dealing with his suffering and unreasonable friends.) If a child is truly seeking and the timing is right, a parent should not turn them away. Questions cause learning, whether it be about spiritual things, or how to mow the lawn, or bait a fish hook, or cook a meal, or even to do a load of laundry. Remember, you are instructing them to leave your home prepared. The "how-to's" are essential. If they do ask, answer only what they are asking, rather than give a detailed account of the meaning of life, when they were simply asking where birds and bees come from. If they ask and you don't know, simply say, "I don't know... but I will find out..." If we are approachable, our children will come to us with listening ears.

"When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, and reason like a child, but when I became a man, I did away with childish things" (1 Cor. 13:11). Let's not forget children need to be children and enjoy creative play. Don't force them to grow up too soon. Childhood is a precious time of life for both parent and child. One day it will all be gone and the house will be quiet – enjoy those days. Creative play is where the creative juices begin to flow and a child's imagination is formed and should be nurtured. What we as parents need to do is train them wisely in their amusements. The center of companionships in a child's early play ought to be the parents themselves. Once they have siblings, it takes care of itself if they love each other and can play together peacefully. We need as parents to learn to enjoy what they enjoy and experience it together. Not that you have to always be on your knees with your 4-year-old, but the time you spend with them will reap huge dividends. I can't tell you how much fun I have had through the years with my kids as we built forts with couch cushions, gave Mr. Potato Head a new look, imagined nerf wars, built Lego kingdoms, or Lincoln logs, or Rock-n-Bock structures, finished puzzles, rode bikes, played sports, played music, went to the park – and we did it together. We had to train them to play first alone contently, and then to play graciously with their siblings. We had to train them to take care of their toys and be good stewards of what they have. I watched a young boy in our neighborhood think it was funny to crash his bike into a wall several times for a laugh. I thought to myself, that child never was

trained in the value of things he has been given. When the kids were done playing for the day, we trained them return things back to where they belong. Rarely did they leave things out overnight. Everyone helped put things away. I have seen several young family's homes, and the kids are ruling the roost, and mom is completely exhausted. If it is your job to pick up after your kid's playtime, you will never survive. Train you children to pick up for themselves every time and it will apply to their rooms as teenagers, until they leave your home. God is a God of order (*1 Cor. 14:33*), and so should we be.

We needed to teach them to prefer each another in their play (*Acts 4:32; Rom. 12:10*), especially when friends come over. We needed to train them to be content with what they have and not want what everyone else has. We had to train them to respect each other's space and to play well together. It doesn't come naturally to share and be kind. Just look in the church nursery. "THAT'S MINE!" is heard often. Parents need to train negative traits out of children (which again only can be fully removed by being transformed by the gospel). Homeschooling helped train our kids to be a team player and play peacefully together. They had to get along. It is easier to teach giving preference to another when you have brothers and sisters, than when you are an only child. Now I admit there were challenges with having a large family. Some children express frustration when their younger siblings copy playing what they do, mainly because they want to be their own persons. Sometimes the older siblings don't necessarily want the younger siblings in their rooms, but having to work through difficulties with our brothers and sisters helps us deal with our own selfishness. All this training of a child's amusement must happen in the impressionable early years, if the later years are going to be enjoyable for you and your children.

It is also important to teach our children to prefer their friend's interests when they are invited to our home (as long as they are honorable). Trumbull said, "It ought to be so, in every well-ordered home that a child can find more pleasure at home than away from home." We wanted to control the choice of the play of our kids, and we made our backyard the place everyone wanted to come. It was a park – volleyball, basketball, green grass for soccer, a rock climbing wall, a swimming pool – what kid wouldn't want to come over? I would rather have my kids with their friends at my home where I can supervise their play, rather than have my kids over at another's home unsupervised, and I never know what is happening.

One other area of training our children in play as they grow into their teen years, is to train them to guard their mind and time. We live in a culture where time is waste-able and not valued. Teenagers spend unlimited time computer gaming with unhealthy amounts of time spent in front of a screen, and at ungodly hours of the night. The lack of discernment in the teen years is the result of years of allowing our children waste their early years on handheld devices playing meaningless time-filler childhood games on Tablets or smartphones. Sadly, some of this form of play becomes a permanent professional amuse-maker that gains a strong hold on a teenager's life, rather than being a temporary interest with balance and

discernment. Trumbull said, “The amusements of children will tend to the gain or to the loss of the children. It is for parents to decide whether the child shall be left to choose their own amusements, with the probability of their choosing to their own harm; or whether the parents shall choose helpful amusements more attractive than the harmful ones.”

It is the desire of every Christian parent to raise their children up in the knowledge of God so that through their teen years and into their young adult years, their kids come to know Christ, and are genuinely excited about their personal relationship with God. Why is this not the case with so many Christian families? How do Christian parents who love God raise kids who are spiritually disinterested? What wasn't passed on? What teaching was missing in the home? What influences early on made a greater impact on the life of those teenagers than the spiritual foundation of their parents? What was modeled in those homes where the kids completely reject the said faith of the parents? You can't give away something you personally don't possess. Many teenagers graduate into college & never return to church. Why is this? Only God knows the hidden reason for a child's spiritual disinterest, but what we do know, how we teach and train our children does matter.

Parent's Main Duty Is To Train & Instruct Their Children In Things Of The LORD:

- What to believe, how to think Biblically, how to live a life that pleases God.
- Early on, if done rightly, you will never find more eager disciples than your own children. Nearly everything they learn will stay with them for the rest of their lives. Children can grasp the essence of almost every Biblical truth.

Parents are the primary discipler of their children.

Deuteronomy 6:5 *“Love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.” “Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 12:39)*

Deuteronomy 4:9 *“Do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life, but **make them known to your sons and your grandsons...so they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth and that they may teach their children.**”*

Deuteronomy 6:2,6-9,20,21 *“...so that you, your children, and their children after them may fear the Lord your God...by keeping all his decrees... so that you may enjoy long life.... These words which I am commanding you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to 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. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates.” “When your sons ask you, ‘What do the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments mean...?’ Then you shall say, ‘The LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God for our good always’...” (11:19; Josh. 4:21) (“shall be on your heart” means “upon the inner man” where a truth is internalized and put into practice)*

* **Everyday Talk:** Talking freely and naturally about God with your children. Bring God into every aspect of your conversation and daily routine, whether it be at home, at mealtimes, while you are traveling, at bed time, or in the morning when you get up. Make God's truth the distinguishing mark of your home. God's truth is to dominate your thinking and over-flow from your heart into the lives of your kids. Look for teachable moments in everyday life, anywhere, anytime. Keep the Word of God constantly on your tongue and mindset. It will become contagious to your kids.

Deuteronomy 11:18-20 *"Fix (impress) these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children..."* ("Impress" means to place something somewhere" referring to God's word being put into a person's heart. "Impress deeply upon" means "to repeat or say something twice," "to make application" in everyday life.)

Deuteronomy 29:29 *"...the things revealed belong to us and to our children... that we may follow all the words of this law."*

Deuteronomy 31:12,13 *"...so they can listen and learn to fear the Lord your God and follow carefully all the words of this law. Their children, who do not know this law, must hear it and learn to fear the Lord your God..."*

Deuteronomy 32:46,47 *"Take it to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. They are not just idle words for you, they are your life. By them you will live long..."*

Joshua 24:15 *"As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*

1 Kings 8:25 *"If only your sons take heed to their way to walk before Me as you have walked."* (2 Chron. 6:16)

Psalms 34:11 *"Those who seek the LORD lack no good thing. Come my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD."*

Psalms 145:4 *"One generation will commend your works to another; they will Tell of your mighty acts."*

The Role Of Scripture And The Conscience In Instruction:

The Scripture contains everything we need for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). God has given us, within the pages of the Bible, every truth necessary to address everything we need for life – everything parents need to teach and train their children. The Scripture is useful (profitable) for doctrine (teaching), reproof (rebuking), correction, and training (instruction) in righteousness, so that believers may be adequately (thoroughly) equipped for every good thing (2 Tim. 3:16,17; 4:2). Maturing sanctification in the lives of our children takes time. When God saves our kids, He begins the process of Christ-likeness. There is no magic formula, no quick fix, or pixie dust, that can make holiness happen instantaneously. The challenge is to get the Bible internalized into a child's mind and heart, even before God saves a child. God's word must richly dwell in each of us (Col. 3:16). A parent's job is to impress the Scriptures

upon their child's heart, which are able to make them wise for salvation (*2 Tim. 3:15*). To do that effectively means we must know the Scriptures ourselves. We cannot rely on someone else teaching our children, but to communicate Biblical truth from our own heart to theirs. We cannot allow any surrogate instructors to take our primary role of the teaching our children diligently. The Bible is to govern every aspect of our lives – it is to be central because it is the basis for everything we are and do. It will affect the inner man which will affect the outer man (*Rom. 7:22; Eph. 3:16*). Children need to be taught how Biblical truth is sufficient and relates to every circumstance in everyday life. The Bible is not just a set of facts to be learned, but truth to be lived out. Just knowing general information can cause arrogance (*1 Cor. 8:1,2*). A child should not just listen, but hear and heed the word of God. We need to teach our children not just know the Scripture, but observe it by obedience and application (*Ja. 1:22,25*). What a child believes about God will affect how he lives (*1 Tim. 4:16*). It is the knowledge of God based on the Scripture that causes the desire to please God and results in bearing fruit (*Col. 1:9,10; Ps. 119:9,11*).

Conviction flows from correct Biblical teaching. It moves a person from knowledge to application – “if this is true, then I must do this...”. Conviction is more than just a strong belief, or feelings of a guilty conscience, it is the knowledge that I am under condemnation for my sin before a Holy and Just God. The Scriptures will instruct the child's mind and conscience, by the work of the Spirit, and will convict the child of sin and his need for God's forgiveness (*Jn. 16:8; Rom. 2:15*). Conscience means (con) “with” and (science) “knowledge.” A parent must use Scripture to appeal to a child's sense of right and wrong, which will prick his conscience to his sinful actions, words, thoughts, attitudes, and desires (*2 Cor. 4:2; Heb. 4:12; 5:14; 9:4; 10:22*). The conscience is like a warning light on our car cash board letting us know something is not right and needs immediate attention. Through the living word of God, we point out our child's sin, and persuade them of their need for Jesus (*2 Cor. 5:19-21*). My mother wrote in a Bible she gave me, “Either this book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this book.” She was right.

Parents, we need to be familiar with our Bibles. We need to know what the Bible says about sin and righteousness and where specifically to find those Biblical principles to bring to bear on our child's sinful heart issues. A child not only needs to know what the Bible says, but what it means, and how it applies specifically to them. Each child is unique and struggles with certain sins (as we all do), so the challenge for parents is to seek out Biblical passages that specifically address their son's or daughter's battles. The Bible has much to say about foolishness, selfishness, anger, disobedience, disrespect, lying, pride, complaining, covetousness, impatience, unkindness, and laziness, as well as the positive side of every action, thought, word, attitude, and desire. Use Biblical terminology. Pick out 1-2 passages that specifically address each sin, as well as passages that highlight what your child may do that is good and you want to reinforce positively when you refer to those verses in your conversation and discipline with your child. Search Biblical cross references, words searches,

or synonyms of your child's struggles to find many rich Bible passages that speak to those sin issues. I find using color highlighters in my Bible on specific themes gives me quicker access and is very helpful for me to remember where they are located. An online program called "Blue Letter Bible" is also a great resource. Use the Bible as well to praise your child when they do what is right and pleasing to the Lord. Lou Priolo said he tries to make it a practice to commend 7x for every 1x reproof he gives to his daughters. Whatever the number, the point is that we must instruct in righteousness as well as against their sinfulness. Instruction is a two-way street. There needs to be a balance between affirmation (encouragement) and reproof (rebuke). We need to be discerning as to the right timing and right wording in our instruction so that our kids have a greater desire to hear and heed what we are saying. We need to instruct with a gentle, humble heart and speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15), praying that they will have a soft heart.

Questions That Help Bring Conviction

Lou Priolo gives these suggestions as possible questions that will encourage conviction as you are instructing your child.

1. Do you know what God calls what you just did or said?
2. Do you realize that what you did is a sin? The Bible calls it_____.
3. Can you think of a more gracious (or other appropriate Biblical term) way to say (or respond to) that?
4. What exactly did you do (that was sinful)?
5. What was going through your mind (or emotions) when you did or said that?
6. What did you want (long for or crave) when you did or said what you did?
7. Are you more concerned about pleasing yourself or pleasing God?
8. How exactly was God glorified by what you said or did?
9. Did you pray about that decision before you made it?
10. What was the Biblical basis for that decision?
11. How did those words built up or minister grace to that person?
12. If I were to ask your teacher (or mother or sister or whoever observed the behavior in question) if what you did was right, what would she (or he) say?
13. What would have been a more God-honoring thought or desire than the one you had?
14. How could you have communicated your displeasure with my decision without being so disrespectful?
15. Can you think of a way you can overcome evil with good?
16. What would have been a better way to respond to your teacher when she falsely accused you in front of the whole class?
17. Can you come up with three biblical options from which you could choose the next time you find yourself in that kind of situation?
18. How should a Christian think, according to the Bible, when he is afraid of telling the truth?

19. What should you have said to yourself the moment you realized you were...?

20. What should you have wanted when you did what you did?

(Lou Priolo, Teach Them Diligently, Timeless Texts: Woodruff, SC., p.60,109,144)

A Father's Role In Instruction:

Dads have a unique role in the teaching and training of their children personally.

Fathers, we set the spiritual tone in our homes. We need to be the spiritual leaders.

Genesis 18:19 (Abraham) “**He** will direct his children and his household... to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just...”

Deuteronomy 6:20 “When your sons ask **you**...”

Deuteronomy 32:46 “Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which **you** shall command your sons to observe carefully, for it is not an idle word for you... it is your life...”

Joshua 4:21 “When your children **ask their fathers** in time to come saying, ‘What are these stones...?’”

Psalms 44:1 “Our **fathers** have told us the work that You did in their days...”

Psalms 78:3-8 “What we have heard and known, what our **fathers** have told us. We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders He has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which He commanded our **forefathers** to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget His deeds but would keep his commands. They would not be like their forefathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to him.”

Proverbs 1:8 “Listen, my son, to your **father's instruction** and do not forsake you mother's teaching.” (Deut. 6:20 “when your son asks”)

Prov. 2:1; 3:1; 4:1-4,10,11,20; 5:1,2,7; 6:1,20,21; 7:1,3,24; 8:32,33; 9:8,9; 10:1; 12:15; 13:1; 15:32; 19:27; 23:22

Proverbs 14:26 “In the fear of the LORD, there is strong confidence. And **his** children will have a place of refuge.”

Proverbs 24:21 “**My** son, fear the LORD and the king...”

1 Chronicles 28:9 “As for you **my son** Solomon, know the God of your **father**, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind...”

Isaiah 38:19 “The **father** shall make known Your truth to the children.”

Isaiah 54:13 “All **your** sons will be taught of the LORD, and the well-being of your sons will be great. In righteousness you will be established.”

1 Thessalonians 2:11 “For you know that we dealt with each of you as a **father** would his children – exhorting, comforting (encouraging), urging (imploring) you to live lives worthy of God...”

A Mother's Role In Instruction:

Because a mother probably will spend most of her time with her children, she has a unique role in instructing her children. If a family chooses to homeschool, she will be their main teacher. There is nothing like the influence that a mother has on her child and she has an incredible opportunity to shape her children for good. She is their cook, maid, chauffeur, teacher, counselor, doctor, referee, and disciplinarian. Her responsibility is to mold character, build confidence, nurture, train, correct, and guide her children in righteousness. Motherhood is truly a high calling before God.

Ginger Plowman remarked about key historical figures mothers impacted them. Thomas Edison was said to say, "My mother was the making of me. She was so true, so sure of me; and I felt I had someone to live for, someone I must not disappoint." (Bartlett and Baker, Mothers - Makers of Men, New York: Exposition Press, 1952, p.92) "Abe Lincoln described his mother as the person chiefly responsible for all he was or ever hoped to become." (Notkin, Mother Tributes From The World's Great Literature, New York: Samuel Curl, 1943, p. 177) George Washington said, "My mother was the most beautiful woman I ever saw. All that I am, I owe to my mother. I attribute all my success in life to the moral, intellectual, and physical education I received from her." (O'Conner, Moms Who Changed The World, Eugene, OR.: Harvest House, 1999, p. 65) (Plowman, Don't Make Me Count To Three, p.22)

Titus 2:3,4 "(The older women) can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God."

2 Timothy 1:5 "I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and I am persuaded, now lives in you also." (generational faith)

Proverbs 1:8 "Do not forsake your mother's teaching.." (6:20)

Proverbs 31:26,30 "She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue." "A woman who fears the LORD she shall be praised."

"Instruction"

Self-control is a prerequisite to a child's ability to learn. As a child matures, the parents control less and teach more. Less spanking and more instruction. Effective discipline makes formal teaching possible. An undisciplined child will be difficult to teach. A disciplined child will be able to be still long enough to be taught.

Proverbs 1:3,4 "To receive instruction in wise behavior, righteousness, justice, and equity." "To the youth knowledge and discretion."

Proverbs 3:1 My son, do not forget my teaching... do not let kindness and truth leave you... write them on the tablet of your heart."

Proverbs 9:9,10 "Give instruction to a wise man and he will be still wiser, teach a righteous man and he will increase his learning." "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."

- A child's main duty is to obey his parents (Col. 3:20). A parent's main goal is to teach their children to obey (Eph. 6:1-3; 1 Sam. 15:22). It does not come naturally. Obedience is something that must be learned. Obedience is the willing submission of one who comes under authority of another. Respect is a byproduct of learning obedience.
- Proper direction of instruction regarding heart issues – right thinking > right emotions (motives/attitudes) > right behavior (right choices).
Psalms 40:8 "I delight to do Your will, O my God, Your Law is within my heart."
Proverbs 23:7 "For as he thinks within himself, so he is."
Luke 6:45 "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good, and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil..."
Parents may begin training a young child first with right instruction in right behavior, and the result of acting rightly will cause right feelings.
Right thinking > right action > right feelings
- Instruction in wise behavior/warning against foolishness
- Methods of instruction – modeling, questions, verbal teaching
Teachable moments – life's object lessons
- Teaching process:
 - The parent instructs and models as the child listens and observes
 - The parent and child do it together and parent then restates
 - The child does it and the parent supervise and evaluate
 - The child does it and parent follows-up and gives greater responsibility.
(house chores, use of money, driving, home repair, fishing, guitar, hobbies)

"Of The Lord"

Ephesians 6:1 says "in the Lord" (1 Peter 2:13 "for the Lord's sake," Colossians 3:20 "well pleasing to the Lord," Colossians 3:23 "as for the Lord"). Why should children honor and obey? Why should we not exasperate them? Why should we discipline and instruct? Because we do it "unto the Lord." Because God says to do so. Ultimately, we do it to please Him. Our goal is to develop in our children a heart for God and godly fear. Children must submit, as we, to the Lordship of Christ. As Colossians 1:9,10 states, they need to come to know God, learn to please Him, and bear fruit in obedience to Him.

We Need To Teach Them Diligently:

Parents' responsibility is to **impart wisdom** to their children:

Prov. 1:2-8; 2:1-12; 3:1,2; 4:1-7,10-13,20; 5:1,2; 6:20,21,23; 7:1; 9:10

Always bring teaching/training back to a Biblical principle.

Teach them:

- A child needs to know how to live (it does not come naturally)
 - 1 Timothy 3:15 “I write to you so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God...”
 - Proverbs 1:2-4,29-31 “receive instruction in wise behavior”
 - We train them for adulthood, to govern their own actions, to control their emotions and attitudes.
- How a child thinks effect how he lives
 - 1 Timothy 4:16 “Watch your life and your doctrine (teaching).
- Teach the sowing/reaping principle (Gal. 6:7,8; 1 Cor. 9:24-27; Prov. 1:31; 13:13,18)
 - Every action has a reaction or consequence – some good, some bad (Deut. 28 – if/then principle)
 - The Law Of The Harvest: We reap what we sow. We reap later than we sow. We reap more than we sow.
 - “Sow a thought, reap an act. Sow an act, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny.”
- Teach Godly fear
 - Psalms 111:10 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.” (Prov. 1:7,29-31; 2:5,6; 8:13; 10:27; 14:16,26,27; 15:16; 16:6; 19:23)
 - (Psalms 51:3,4; Job 1:1; 10:14; 13:9; 28:28; 2 Chron. 19:7; Ps. 90:11; 128:1-4; Prov. 1:9; 3:7; 8:13; 9:10; 14:16; 15:33; 16:6; Ecc. 12:13; 2 Cor. 7:1)
 - Robert Haldane, Exposition of Romans
 - “It is astonishing that men, while they acknowledge that there is a God, should act without any fear of His displeasure. Yet, this is their character. They are more afraid of man than of God. The fear of man prevents them from doing many things from which they are not restrained by the fear of God. They love not His character, not rendering to Him veneration which is due.”
 - Webster’s Dictionary of 1828 states: “The fear of God is a holy awe or reverence of God and his laws which springs from a just view and real love of the divine character leading the subjects of it to hate and shun everything that can offend such a holy being and inclining them to aim at perfect obedience.. This is filial fear.”
 - A healthy family fears God.
 - Train our children in a reverential awe, and God-conscious fear
 - (Ex. 20:20; Deut. 28:58; Is. 8:13; Acts 24:16; 1 Pet. 2:19; 1 Cor. 10:31)
 - The deeper our sense of our own guilt, the more profound should be our view of God’s holiness and our dread of God’s displeasure.
 - Sin is a capital offense against a holy God.

We need to love our children and tenderly handle them through times when they experience human fear of the unknown, danger, embarrassment, or inability.

- To guard their heart and mind
 - Proverbs 4:23 “Guard your heart with all diligence, for out of it springs the issues of life.” (Phil. 4:8; 2 Cor. 10:5)
 - Proverbs 23:7 “As he thinks in his heart, so is he.”
 - Psalms 101:3,4 “I will set before my eyes no vile thing.” “I will have nothing to do with evil.”
- To honor & obey their parents
 - (Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20; Prov. 4:1-4; 6:20-23)
- To choose their friends wisely
 - Proverbs 12:26 “A righteous man is cautious in friendship.”
 - Proverbs 13:20 “He who walks with wise men grows wise, but the companion of fools suffers harm.”
 - Psalms 101:6,7 “My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land that they may dwell with me. He who walks a blameless way is the one who will minister to me. He who practices deceit shall not dwell within my house. He who speaks falsehood shall not maintain his position before me.”
 - 1 Corinthians 15:33 “Do not be deceived, bad company corrupts good morals.”
 - (Prov. 1:10-19; 2:10-15; 4:14,15; 14:7; 17:17; 19:4; 22:24; 23:17; 24:1)
 - * Children are more prone to follow a bad example than to set a good example.
- To control the flesh (youthful lust/unrighteous desire)
 - (Prov. 6:23,24,25,32,33; Titus 2:12; 2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Thess. 4:3-7)
 - Proverbs 20:11 “Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right.”
- To honor God with their bodies and be faithful to protect their future marriage. (Prov. 18:22; 5:15-19; Heb. 13:4; 1 Thess. 4:4)
- To control their tongue and speak the truth in love (Prov. 4:24; 8:6-8; 10:19,32; 12:18,19,22; 13:3; 15:1,7; 17:27,28; 18:21; 21:23)
- To work hard (Prov. 6:6-11; 10:4,22; 13:4,21; 14:23; 28:20)
- To manage their money wisely, to be good stewards, and give unto the Lord. (Prov. 3:9; 10:4,5,22; 11:24,28; 13:8,11,22; 14:23; 15:27; 21:5,17,20; 22:1,7,26,27; 23:4,5)
 - Divide their money into three areas: spend, save, give
 - Teenagers can learn to manage a checking account/debit card
- To treat others as you would want to be treated. To love your neighbor as

yourself. To love your enemies. (Prov. 3:27,28; 25:21,22; Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:44-48; 22:39; 1 Jn. 2:9-11; 4:19,20)

It does no good to teach our children sound wisdom and then live a life that contradicts what we are teaching. Solomon's content of instruction to his children was sound. He failed in his example of living out what he knew to be true. Rehoboam rejected the wisdom of his father (1 Kg. 11:1,2,9-14;12:6-13) and split the kingdom.

Children Who Are Trained Have A Teachable Spirit & Heed Parental Wisdom

As parents, we are to train our children to have ears to hear, to desire wisdom, and to have a teachable spirit. This is reflected in their eye contact, quietly listening, and responding to parental instruction. We desire that our children live consistently these principles of wisdom and are reflected in their character. Parents, it does no good to teach our children sound wisdom and then live a life that contradicts what we are teaching. Solomon made the connection between wisdom and righteous conduct. Sadly, the content of Solomon's instruction to his son was sound, but he nullified that truth by his bad example set before his son toward the end of his life (1 Kg. 11:1,2; 12:6-13). In Ephesians 6:1 the word "obey" means to "heed" or "listen with the intent of doing." All of our wise instruction should point to Christ (Col. 2:3). A child must learn to listen, hear, and heed wisdom.

Proverbs 1:5,8 "A wise man will **hear** and increase in learning." "**Hear** my son, your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching."

Proverbs 1:33 "But he who **listens** to me (wisdom) shall live securely and shall be at ease from the dread of evil."

Proverbs 2:1,2,5,9,10 "My son, if you will **receive** my sayings and treasure my commandments within you, make your ear **attentive** to wisdom and incline your heart to understanding... then you will discern the fear of the LORD and discover the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom... From His mouth come knowledge and understanding...then you will discern righteousness and justice and equity and every good course. For wisdom will enter your heart and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul."

Proverbs 4:1,10,11,20 "**Hear** o sons, the instruction of a father, and give **attention** that you may gain understanding. For I give you sound teaching..." "**Hear** my son and accept my sayings, and the years of your life will be many. I have directed you in the way of wisdom..." "My son, give **attention** to my words, **incline** your ear to my sayings..."

Proverbs 5:1,7 "My son, give **attention** to my wisdom... that you may observe discretion..." "Now my sons, **listen** to me..."

Proverbs 6:20,23 "My son, **observe** the commandment of your father, and do not forsake the teaching of your mother." "Reproofs for discipline are the way of life."

Proverbs 7:1,24 "My son, **keep** my words, treasure my commandments within you... my teaching as the apple of your eye... write them on the tablet of your

heart..." "Now therefore, my sons, **listen** to me and pay **attention** to the words of my mouth..."

Proverbs 8:6-8,32-35 "**Listen**, for I shall speak noble things, and the opening of my lips will produce right things, for my mouth will utter truth... all the utterances of my mouth are in righteousness..." "O sons, **listen** to me (wisdom), for blessed are they who keep my ways. **Heed** instruction and be wise... blessed is the man who **listens** to me... for he who finds me (wisdom) finds life and obtains favor from the LORD."

Proverbs 9:8 "Reprove a wise man and he will love you."

Proverbs 10:8,17 "The wise of heart will **receive** commands..." "He is on the path of life who **heeds** instruction."

Proverbs 13:18 "He who **regards** reproof will be honored."

Proverbs 15:31 "He whose ear **listens** to the life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise."

Proverbs 15:31,32 "He who neglects discipline despises himself, but he whose ear **listens** to life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise."

Proverbs 17:10 "A rebuke goes deeper into one who has understanding, than a hundred blows into a fool."

Proverbs 22:17 "**Incline** your ear and **hear** the words of the wise, and apply your mind to my knowledge, for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you that they may be ready on your lips. So that your trust may be in the LORD."

Proverbs 23:19 "**Listen** my son and be wise, and **direct** your heart in the way."

Proverbs 23:22 "**Listen** to your father who begot you and do not despise your mother when she is old."

Psalms 141:5 "Let the righteous smite me in kindness and **reprove** me, it is oil on the heart, do not let my head refuse it..."

Warnings:

"It is not enough for parents to give wise counsel and advice on many things, if a son or daughter is not listening." "There is no point in bouncing good teaching off a boy's forehead." "In order to get a child's attention, it is necessary to discipline him. Boys are not born teachable." Correction enables a boy to humbly receive instruction. Sons must be taught to listen. They may have ears, but they are not born willing to listen with discernment (Prov. 3:11,12) (Wilson, *Future Men*, p. 188). The Bible warns against foolish rejection of wisdom. Selective listening must be corrected with loving discipline. Discipline seems to clear up a hearing problem. A child must discern a parent's voice from all the other noise of culture.

Proverbs 1:7 "A fool despise wisdom and instruction."

Proverbs 1:22 "Fools hate knowledge."

Proverbs 1:23-25,29-32 "I called and you refused... and no one paid attention, you

neglected all my counsel and did not want my reproof.” “Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD... They would not accept my counsel, they spurned all my reproof... so they shall eat of the fruit of their own way... and the complacency of fools will destroy them.”

Proverbs 5:12,13 “How I have hated instruction and my heart spurned reproof. I have not listened to the voice of my teachers, nor inclined my ear to my instructors.”

Proverbs 10:17 “He who forsakes reproof goes astray.”

Proverbs 12:1 “He who hates reproof is stupid.”

Proverbs 15:10 “He who hates reproof will die.”

Proverbs 15:12 “A scoffer does not love one who reproves him...”

Proverbs 19:27 “Cease listening, my son to discipline, and you will stray from the words of knowledge.”

Jeremiah 22:21 “I spoke to you in your prosperity, but you said, ‘I will not listen.’ This has been your practice from your youth that you have not obeyed My voice.”

A gracious teacher or discipler is known for being someone who demonstrates a gracious openness to close examination by the family, one who is also teachable, and willing to listen and continue learning as we press on towards Christ-likeness. A parent must never assume that just because they are the adult, they are always right. I can't tell you how many times I have had to eat my own words and admit I got it wrong (Ja. 5:16). As humbling as that is, it is healthy for our children to respectfully understand we too are in process (Prov. 29:23; Ja. 4:6). A grace-filled discipler is kind and tender (Prov. 31:26), they must be truthful and humble, trustworthy and faithful in their dealings. Forbearing (long-suffering) in their responses (Gal. 6:1). We need to be good listeners and never expect from our children more than we are willing to give. You will never lead your children higher than where you already are (Lk. 6:40). How you present truth has a great influence on how they receive it.

Train a child to always speak the truth – the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Keep away from falsehood, deceit, exaggeration, additions or subtractions. Anything less than the truth is a lie, evasion, excuse-making, exaggeration are all halfway houses towards what is false and ought to be avoided. Encourage openness and straightforwardness.

3 John 4 “I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.”

Train a child to redeem the time and be on time (punctual)

J.C. Ryle – “We must have our hands filled and our minds occupied with something or else our imaginations will soon ferment and breed mischief.” Idleness is the devil's best friend. Teach them the value of time and try to make them learn the habit of using it well.”

What Hinders Us As Parents From Passing On Our Spiritual Convictions To Our Children?

- We spend so little time together as a family (barrenness of busy lives, substitute Parents, electronic parents). A lifestyle of separation affects our ability to nurture our children as God desires. You cannot disciple or mentor someone you are seldom around.
- We talk so little as a family about God and what He has done in our lives. (fast food Christianity)
- We have delegated the teaching of our children to Sunday School teachers, youth pastors, Christian Schools, grandparents, & Christian videos.
- Church attendance, personal Bible study, and personal holiness have become somewhat optional (Hebrews 10:24).
- We have become secularized by the prevailing culture, and lost our distinction, and saltiness. (Deut. 7:26; 8:10-12 Lev. 18:3-5)
- We live a life of contradiction. Titus 1:16 “(we) claim to know God, but by our deeds we deny Him.” (Matt. 15:8; 23:3,23,25,27,28) (inconsistency, double standard, hypocrisy) We are always teaching our children, the real question is what.

What About Outside Influences:

When children are not present with parents, parents are still responsible for what the child is being taught in their absence. Who is the major influence in your child's life? If you are not talking to your kids, someone else is. Are they point them to or away from God? Someone will always be influencing your children. What are outside influences teaching your children when you are not around? (school, friends, TV/movies, music, magazines, internet). How do you counter unbiblical thinking your children are exposed to? How can parents compete with the world for the minds and hearts of their children? James 4:4 “Friendship with the world is hostility towards God.” How are you providing a Christ-centered education for your children? How can we as parents guard and protect our children to avoid either extreme: isolation –v- assimilation/secular/carnal?

Evaluation Questions For Parents:

1. Is your life as you live it before your kids a validation or a contradiction of God's Truth? (Heb. 5:12)
2. Are you a stumbling block or a signpost to your kids' future faith?
3. Do you regularly worship God together as a family?
4. Do your kids reflect your personal values/priorities/spiritual health?
5. How often do you read the Bible together or share something about God with your kids?
6. What deep spiritual truths have you taught to your children lately?
7. If a person came into your home, would they know you were a believer? What visible symbols would they see? Do you talk about God at home?

8. Do you know for certain that your children are saved? What is the visible evidence they know Christ as Savior and Lord? Have they professed their faith in Christ publicly in baptism?
9. How is God's Truth reflected in the choices your children are making?
10. How do your children reflect the character of Christ?
11. How are you improving in your knowledge of God so you are able to teach your children diligently? (Hebrews 5:12; Colossians 3:16)
12. How often do your kids see you reading your Bible? How often do you refer to the Bible in normal conversation with your family? How are you growing and passing those truths to your kids?
13. Do you teach your children deep spiritual truths they will grow in to or light explanations they will grow out of.
14. How well do you know your Bible? Are you able to refer to the Scriptures in your teaching, correction, or reproof of your children in righteousness?

Suggestions To Instruct Your Kids In The Lord:

- Turn off the TV, get off your computer or smart phone, and spend some quality time together as a family instead. Maybe consider getting rid of TV or cable and its influence all together.
- Read the Bible through – Genesis to Revelation (discuss what you read) (Col. 3:16)
George Barna notes, "Fewer than one out of every ten born-again families read the Bible together or pray together during a typical week." (Barna, Revolutionary Parenting, p. 31)
Robert Murray M'Cheyne (1813-1843) said, "If you do not worship God in your family, you are living in positive sin; you may be quite sure you do not care for the souls of your family. If you neglected to spread a meal for your children to eat, would it not be said that you did not care for their bodies? And if you do not lead your children and servants to the green pastures of God's word, and to seek the living water, how plain is it that you do not care for their souls? Do it regularly, morning and evening. It is more needful than your daily food – more needful than your work." (Robert M. M'Cheyne, The Sermons of Robert M. M'Cheyne, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1961, p. 29)
- Pray together as a family before the kids go to bed (not just at meals)
- Memorize Scripture together (put Scripture to music) (Ps. 119:11; 40:8)
Meditating on Scripture allows the mind to digest truth and apply it to life.
- Listen to Christian audio cd's
Hidden In My Heart (lullabies)
Patch The Pirate
Listen to dramatized versions of the Bible
- View Christian Biblical videos together and discuss their content. (Not Veggie Tails...)

Answers in Genesis

“Creation Proclaims” with Dr. Jobe Martin and Dan Breeding

“Creatures That Defy Evolution” with Dr. Jobe Martin

Ray Comfort on the street interviews

Steve Green music videos “Hide Them In Your Heart”

- Read to your kids storybooks with solid Biblical teaching, or autobiographies of godly people, or missionary biographies. (Jesus Freaks by DC Talk)
- Guard your home from anything that would erode Biblical standards (music, TV, video, internet, cable) You are the gatekeepers. How are you protecting your home from destructive influences?
- Sing praise songs together (use your musical gifts together as a family)
Over the years our kids have developed music abilities as a praise band.
- Talk about Sunday School/Adventure Club material with your kids around the dinner table.
- Express verbal thanks often for what God has done in your lives together.
Admit your areas of weakness and point to God’s grace.
- Make your home a visible representation of your love for Christ in how you decorate!
- Practice hospitality. Invite other believing families over.
- Sit together as a family in church!
- Serve together at church.
- Sponsor a child from Compassion or go on a mission trip together.
- Take your children with you when you witness to others. Let them see real Christianity lived out through your life.

Training Children In Godly Wisdom And Character:

2 Timothy 3:14-17 “Continue in what you have learned and have become of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy **Scriptures** which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for **teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness**, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Use Scripture To... (2 Timothy 3:16,17; 4:2; 1 Thess. 2:11,12; Ps. 119:)

- **teach** (instruct/doctrine) (What does God expect of me?)
- **reproof/rebuke** (convict of sin) (How have I broken God’s Law?)
 - Appeal to their conscience & guilt (Rom. 2:4,15; Lk. 18:13).
 - Our offense (sin) is directed toward God and Man.
 - Love them enough to give them what God says they need – even if it is not what they want. (Prov. 29:17)
- **correct** (restore) (What does God want me to change?)
 - Direct them towards repentance/reconciliation/restitution.

- To restore is to “refresh” or “bring back”
- Restoration does not necessarily mean that there will be no consequences for our sin or that trust is instantly restored.
- Forgiveness follows a repentant heart, but lost trust may take time to be fully restored (2 Cor. 2:7,8).
- **train in righteousness** (How will I now live?)
 - Putting off (forsaking sin) & putting on (righteousness)
Example: Eph. 4:22-25,28
 - put off falsehood, put on truthfulness
 - put off theft, put on diligent work and generosity
 - A habit is something that is practiced consistently enough that it becomes second nature or natural to your pattern of life – whether it is a good habit or not. It becomes routine.
 - Good habits make life pleasant, automatic, peaceful, & organized. (Heb. 5:13,14; 1 Tim. 4:7; Heb. 12:11)
 - Train your children to develop good habits.
- Result: “thoroughly equipped for every good work”
- Remember, if God’s word is dear to us, it will be important to our children.
 - You can’t give away what you don’t have. Many say they believe in God, too few delight in Him.
 - A child needs to internalize the Scriptures through Bible reading, memorization, meditation, and Bible study.

Childhood Struggles:

We need to bring God’s word to bear on specific areas our child struggles. Parents should ask, “What are the specific faults of my child?” “Where is he weakest?” “In what direction is his greatest strength liable to lead him astray, and when is it most likely to fail him?” “Which of his faults is most prominent?” “Which of them is of chief importance for immediate correction?” (Trumbull, Hints On Child Training, p.15) What are some of the things they struggle in?

- rough indoor play/loud overbearing conversation (Prov. 27:14; 1 Cor. 9:25)
- selfishness with certain toys (James 4:1-3)
- unwillingness to help (Matt. 23:4)
- complaining/grumbling with siblings (Phil. 2:14)
- anger when not get what want (Ja. 1:19,20)
- not being truthful (Eph. 4:25)
- not completing a task when asked/partial obedience (Col. 3:20)
- lack of self-control/haste (Prov. 19:2; 18:13)
- unbalance of snacking (Prov. 23:19-21; 25:16)
- disrespectful talk (Prov. 23:15,16)
- needing to be discreet (Prov. 10:19; 12:23)

- responding to disappointment (Prov. 16:32; 25:28)
- easily distracted (Prov. 18:1,2)
- laziness (Prov. 6:6-11; 20:11)

If a parent were willing to check their blind spots, they might ask a truthful friend who is competent to judge, “What do you think is the chief fault, or most objectionable characteristic, of my son or daughter?” Their frank answer might surprise us. The child may be so much like the parent, that the parent is unaware of those characteristics because of their own similar faults keeps them from seeing it clearly. We parents need true friends who can speak impartially and kindly in to our lives to help us gain a proper estimate and understanding of our children’s characteristics and needs.

Things To Remember:

- Children can grasp Biblical Truth. Don’t hold back teaching your children because you think they are not ready. All symbolism must be carefully explained. Some concepts may need a more simplified explanation, but the essence of Biblical principles can be understood at an early age (Mark 10:15).
- Avoid figurative language and unexplained symbolism. Children think in literal, vivid imagery.
- Clearly separate reality from fantasy. Fantasy can be a valuable tool for teaching children. Make sure you clearly draw the line between reality and make-believe. Biblical stories actually happened historically, and prophecy will be fulfilled someday. Also, clearly define the line between what is good and what is evil. Don’t allow that line to be fuzzy who the good guy is and who is the bad guy. Most TV and movies cloud the difference between right and wrong (Ezek. 22:26; 44:23).
- Ask questions to learn what your children are thinking. Teach children to ask questions. Be available for those teachable moments (bed time) (Ex. 13:14; Deut. 6:20,21; 29:22,24, 25; Josh. 4:6,21). Questioning is the expression of mental appetite/spiritual curiosity. Ask questions that appeal to your child’s conscience (*with knowledge*). (Gen. 4:6; Matt. 7:3; Heb. 4:12)
- Learning is a process and may take time to understand fully (needing repetition).

We All Need To Be Teachable: (“I know...” 1 Cor. 8:1,2)

Deuteronomy 11:13 “If you listen obediently to my commands...” (12:28; 13:4,18; 15:5)

Proverbs 1:8 “Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching.”

“Listen” “Hear”

Prov. 4:1-7,10,20; 5:1,2,7,13; 6:20,21; 7:3,24; 8:6,32; 9:8,9; 12:15; 13:1; 15:32; 19:20,27; 22:17; 23:19,22

Parental Hall Of Shame:

Parents of disrespectful, disobedient, disinterested, and rebellious children feel embarrassment, disgrace, and shame. Undisciplined or spiritually disinterested un-teachable children are a direct reflection on the parents. There is a direct connection between how a child is brought up and how they turn out.

Proverbs 17:21,25; 10:1 "To have a fool for a son brings grief; there is no joy for the father of a fool." "A foolish son brings grief to his father and bitterness to the one who bore him."

(Proverbs 22:6; 29:15; 28:7; 10:5; 19:26; 17:2)

Remember, there is hope and a chance to begin again. The childhood years and the future parent-teen years can be a joy, not a disaster, if we don't lose heart and are faithful to discipline and instruct our children in the Lord! Every day is a new day for obedience. Don't miss your opportunity.

Proverbs 23:24,25 "The father of a righteous man has great joy; he who has a wise son delights in him. May your father & mother be glad; may she who gave you birth rejoice."

Galatians 6:9 "Let us now become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

"We must teach our children to love the Scriptures. We must teach the promises along with the warnings. We must teach the perfect sacrifice of Christ for sin along with the description of our sinfulness. We must let our children hear how God's law is sweeter than honey from the honeycomb. By it we are warned, and by keeping it there is great reward (Ps. 19:10,11). The most effective way to teach our children to love the Scriptures is to love it ourselves. They will see us longing to read it, hear it, and understand it, and learn that it is valuable." (Instructing A Child's Heart, Tripp, p. 21)

Your Relationship With Christ Is Of Most Importance:

- Family is secondary

Matthew 10:37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me."

Prayer Is Most Important: (Job 1:5; 1 Chronicles 29:19)

Closing: How are you passing the baton to the next generation?

Passing Zone (limited time/space – danger of disqualification)
(example of track relay race)

Deuteronomy 32:47 *"These are not idle words... they are your life! By them you will live long..."*

Closing Thoughts On Instruction

“Parents, if you fail to teach your children to fear God, the devil will teach them to hate God. If you fail to teach them to guard their minds, the devil will teach them to have a corrupt mind. If you fail to teach them to obey their parents, the devil will teach them to rebel and break their parents’ hearts. If you fail to teach them to select carefully their companions, the devil will choose companions for them. If you fail to teach them to control their lusts, the devil will teach them how to fulfill their lusts. If you fail to teach them to enjoy their own spouses, the devil will teach them to destroy their marriages. If you fail to teach them to watch their words, the devil will fill their mouths with filth. If you fail to teach them to pursue their work, the devil will make their laziness a tool of hell. If you fail to teach them to manage their money, the devil will teach them to squander it on riotous living. And if you fail to teach them to love their neighbor, the devil will teach them to love only themselves. We have a great responsibility to this generation and the next.” (John MacArthur, Successful Christian Parenting, p. 103,104)