

Teaching Your Children to Know Jesus

Deuteronomy 6

The Goal: Passing the Faith to the Next Generation to Enjoy God's Blessing (Deuteronomy 6:1-3)

- By living faithfully and responding to God's teachings in obedience, Israel would pass along their faith to the next generations, to their children, and to their grandchildren. (v. 1-2)
 - How you raise your children today may affect how your grandchildren know the Lord tomorrow.
- Blessings come through obedience. "*Be careful to **do** them, that it may go **well** with you.*" (v. 3)

Parents: It Starts With You (Deuteronomy 6:4-6)

- You must know God yourself if you are to teach your children. He is the "only" God. (v. 4)
- You must love the Lord through whole-hearted pursuit. This affects every area of your life. (v. 5)
- You must study the Word in order to teach the Word. (v. 6)

Intentionality: Make the Most of Every Moment (Deuteronomy 6:7-9)

- Two pairs of opposites to describe the whole of life (v. 7). "You shall talk of them..."
 - **No matter where you are:** "When you sit in your house and when you walk by the way."
 - **No matter what time:** "When you lie down, and when you rise."
 - *The point is to daily and continually speak to your children about spiritual things.*
- The Word should affect your actions and your thoughts. (v. 8)
 - Actions: "Bind them as a sign on your hand..."
 - Thoughts: "They shall be as frontlets between your eyes."
- Daily remind yourself of the Scriptures. Your entire life should be saturated by the Word! (v. 9)

Beware of Worldly Comfort: Don't Forget the Lord Because of His Blessings (Deuteronomy 6:10-15)

- There is a temptation to become self-dependent when we live in extravagant comfort.
- This may cause us to fail in teaching our children about the Lord because practically we may live as though we don't really need Him.
- "Do not go after other gods..." Idolatry can easily creep in, especially when it comes to your children's hobbies, activities, etc. While these are good, don't let them take the place of God in your family life.
- Don't sacrifice your child's spiritual well-being by empowering them to be satisfied with anything more than God. He is a jealous God.

Diligence: This Will Be Hard Work, but It Will be Worth It in the End! (Deuteronomy 6:16-19)

- Don't test the Lord by failing to trust His promises. (v. 16)
- Instead, continue to diligently teach your children trusting that God will be faithful in bringing them to faith, even when it is difficult to press on. The blessings of obedience will be worth it! (v. 17-19)

Remember Why: Keep the Gospel at the Center! (Deuteronomy 6:20-25)

- When your children begin asking spiritual questions, be prepared to share the gospel with them.
- "Mommy, why do you teach us to love and worship God?"
 - As the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, we were slaves to sin.
 - As God delivered Israel with a mighty hand, God powerfully delivered us through the cross of Christ.
 - Just as God showed Israel many signs and wonders to prove his power over Pharaoh, God gave us the sign of the Jesus' resurrection to demonstrate his power over death.
 - The Lord commanded us to love him and trust him so that we could be saved.
 - This is righteousness before God, to love him, trust him, obey him, follow him, and worship him.

Practical Tips

- **Let your kids see your own vibrant faith.** “The greatest stumbling block for children in worship is parents who don’t cherish their own worship. *We can’t impart what we don’t possess*”. --John Piper
- **Dads need to take the lead on this.** “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4, ESV)
- **Read Christian books to them often.** Teach them to love reading. Find a good children’s Bible to read them nightly (I recommend the *Jesus Storybook Bible*). As they get older,
- **Pray with your kids daily.** Teach your children to commune with God personally. Pray throughout the day, and pray out loud so they can hear you. Encourage them to pray. Speak blessings over them before they go to bed.
- **Teach your children good Christian songs and encourage them to sing.** Play Christian songs in your house, particularly songs that are joyful and talk a lot about Jesus. Teach them songs that you sing at church, so that when your children hear those songs at church they can participate.
- **Apologize often.** We parents make mistakes too. Let your children see your humble requests for forgiveness, and it will be a powerful statement of God’s grace and your love to them.
- **Don’t waste your Sundays.** Talk to your kids about what they learned at church. Also, try to bring them in to “big church” as much as possible to see you worship with the rest of God’s people.
- **Teach your children to memorize Scripture.** Your children will amaze you at how much they remember. Don’t assume that they can’t do it. Start simple. Practice saying Bible verses as part of your bedtime routine. Celebrate progress. Don’t be concerned with how fast or how many they remember, just make it a habit. You are sowing seed here, and we store up God’s word in our heart so that we don’t sin against him. Their hearts will one day catch up with their heads, so plant lots of biblical truth early and you’ll see a great return later.

Suggested Resources:

- For Bible Reading: *The Jesus Storybook Bible* by Sally Lloyd-Jones; *The Biggest Story* by Kevin DeYoung
- For Scripture Memorization: www.fighterverses.com (see also the Fighter Verses app)
- For Singing: *Sing!* by Keith and Kristyn Getty
 - Music- Seeds Family Worship, Getty Kids Hymnal
- Prayer: *What Every Child Should Know About Prayer* by Nancy Guthrie
- Devotionals: *Thoughts to Make Your Heart Sing* by Sally Lloyd-Jones
- Advent Devotions: *Unwrapping the Greatest Gift* by Ann Voskamp;
- Christian Fiction: *Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis