

Family Fusion – Getting In The Game

Core Values: Family Affirming

We seek to provide a ministry environment that strengthens and supports marriage and family. We believe in providing age appropriate ministry for all family members.

Review: Parenting and Discipline, Honesty, Divine Design

Your feedback is important and needed as we plan for 2013. Tell us about your family and parenting issues that we can speak to from God’s Word? Tell us how can we support, encourage, and edify you and your family?

Send email to: josh@calvarywyncote.com

Today we want to talk about you and your children and their spiritual health. We want to look at what God has to say about equipping your children for facing the world we live in from a biblical perspective, and for living as a child of God in this world.

Let’s look at the “Get In The Game” Commission to parents: We talk about the Great Commission – it starts in the home!

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Deuteronomy 6:5 – 9
ESV

The Message: ⁵ *Love GOD, your God, with your whole heart: love him with all that's in you, love him with all you've got! Write these commandments that I've given you today on your hearts. Get them inside of you and then get them inside your children. Talk about them wherever you are, sitting at home or walking in the street; talk about them from the time you get up in the morning to when you fall into bed at night. Tie them on your hands and foreheads as a reminder; inscribe them on the doorposts of your homes and on your city gates.*

How many home schooler parents do we have here? How many parents do we have here? Well, you are all home schoolers!

One Sunday a teacher asked her class, “*Why do you children believe in God?*” One little girl replied, “*I guess it just runs in our family.*”

That's delightfully true. Faith runs in families. That does not mean that we inherit faith. Faith is not genetic; but faith does have a way of becoming a family heritage as truth is passed from one generation to another. Family time that involves children with God's Word is vital in them catching the faith from us!

Truth: Every child is born with the capacity to know God!

However, the family is responsible for developing this capacity. In fact, your child's God-concept – how they see God and think about God and their emotional attitude toward God – comes from you! How you respond to God in daily life, how you handle the storms of life, how you decide what is important, your behavior choices, etc.; all of this shapes a picture in the mind of children.

How do we develop a child's capacity to know God?

The verses that we just read give us insight. Note that it all begins with loving God. If we lack love for God, all the rules in the world

will not keep us true to Him. **Love motivates us to listen and obey!**

Love has to do with what you set your heart on. There's an old proverb: "*Be careful what you set your heart on for it might come true!*" History validates that statement. Think about it! Thomas Edison fell in love with inventing. Henry Ford fell in love with cars. Kettering fell in love with research. The Wright brothers fell in love with airplanes. Their "hearts" controlled their use of time, energy, resources; and the direction as well as the results of their lives.

Beginning with a child's heart; teaching them to love God, is vital. God begins there, not with external actions. Do you know why that's important? God doesn't want external actions – talking about God, having signs and wall hangings with scripture on them, carrying God's Word around with you, etc. to become a substitute for the inner experience – the matters of the heart.

What have you set your heart on? Want power (the heart) is a strong drive for will power (the head).

The verses we read teach us that the home is to be the center for passing on truth. Someone said: *Home is where life makes up its mind.* This passing on of truth was not to be a bunch of lectures given to a child, but a way of life modeled for a child.

Quote: "You teach what you know. You reproduce what you are." How many of you would like your children to read the Bible and pray? How many of you would love to have your daughter marry a man who prays with her? Do your children see you reading the Bible, do they hear you praying, do they observe Mom and Dad praying together, or participate in the family praying together?

You see, you can interpret the words of Deuteronomy 6, literally as many Jews did and do. Then the symbols of religion are exalted over the condition of the heart. Wear the scriptures on your body, fasten them to your doorposts, and hang them on your walls...and all that's OK and good. But this is a way of life that God is talking about. This is using the events of everyday life to teach, to model, to lead, to demonstrate, to talk about God, and to learn to love God.

Family devotions are not just a once a week time to gather and sing, pray, read scripture and talk about life and God. **Family devotions is weaving our love and devotion to God into the fabric of everyday life.** Listen to this video which helps us grasp what our kids need.

VIDEO: I'll Need You

Listen to what God says to his people about this:

The Message: Deuteronomy 6:20 – 25 *The next time your child asks you, "What do these requirements and regulations and rules that GOD, our God, has commanded mean?" tell your child, "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and GOD powerfully intervened and got us out of that country. We stood there and watched as GOD delivered miracle-signs, great wonders, and evil-visitations on Egypt, on Pharaoh and his household. He pulled us out of there so he could bring us here and give us the land he so solemnly promised to our ancestors. That's why GOD commanded us to follow all these rules, so that we would live reverently before GOD, our God, as he gives us this good life, keeping us alive for a long time to come.*

²⁵ *"It will be a set-right and put-together life for us if we make sure that we do this entire commandment in the Presence of GOD, our God, just as he commanded us to do."*

I said earlier that family devotions, getting into the spiritual game or battle as a family is more than a once a week gathering. You need those times, but you also need to use the natural teaching moments that the Holy Spirit provides; teachable moments.

Some insights from what we just read:

1. Children Ask Questions

It is the nature of children to be inquisitive. Wise parents will encourage and leverage this questioning spirit to help their children establish their own faith.

Parents who are afraid of questions and discourage a child's asking will stifle their growth in faith.

2. Parent's Have A Story To Tell

NLT: Deuteronomy 4:9 *But watch out! Be careful never to forget what you yourself have seen. Do not let these memories escape from your mind as long as you live! And be sure to pass them on to your children and grandchildren.*

Hosea 4:6 *My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.*

Think about the historical context of these words. In Deuteronomy, God is shaping a people, a family of God lovers and followers. A people with a legacy...leaving the past and slavery behind. In Hosea, God is lamenting because they forgot and forsook truth.

This warning about forgetting is important. One of the ways you keep faith alive in your family, is by talking about your family's faith stories. How many of you are first generation followers of Jesus – you are the first member of your family to come to Christ?

God wants children to see that their parent's faith is not just a belief system they have chosen, but it is also a result of God's powerful activity in their lives. It is not some abstract invention they have come up with or that the church talked them into.

Israel had a story to tell about slavery and liberation. **You have a story to tell about the difference Jesus has made in your life!**

At some point, you may have said: "This stops here! I am not going to let the destructive patterns of sin destroy me and my children. We are taking a stand against Satan and for Jesus Christ! A new legacy begins with me and my family."

Do your children know that story? Do they know what life would have been like for you and them if it wasn't for Jesus? You see, home schooling consists of remembering and talking about the experiences with God in the past. Then it is teaching and showing your children how God's love and truth has changed your life, and as a result, the family of which they are a part. Stop having secrets and tell the story so your children can be amazed by God's love and grace, and be attracted to the kind of life that Jesus offers.

The church cannot do this! This is the parent's responsibility for their children's spiritual education. God warned Israel that failure to remember His blessings and to teach the lessons learned to their children would result in spiritual disaster for Israel. The same is true today. You have a story of faith. It is not – our family was just lucky! Don't be ashamed or embarrassed to talk about what God has done for you. This makes faith real to your children and grandchildren.

3. The Story Is About God's Good Plans For Our Lives

Children should be taught that every command and action of God is for our good always. God's highest goal is not to demonstrate his power as a way of showing us that he is in charge, but rather to use his power to draw us to him so that we might have the very best of God's plan for our lives.

Reciting the benefits of following God becomes part of the motivation for following God!

How has your life changed for the good since Jesus? Tell your children about all the blessings that have come from following Christ. They need to know that no one else, and no other little g god can even come close to our Creator, Redeemer, Savior God!

Scripture we read: He brought us out of Egypt. He did signs and wonders before our eyes. He is for our good always.

4. Encourage Your Children To Choose God's Path For Their Lives

If all you do is teach about God, and teach them godly rules for living, but you don't help them make life application, then you are like a farmer who plows the ground but never plants the seed.

We want to help our children see how obedience to God's commands will result in *a set-right and put-together life* – a righteous life that brings blessing to the next generation.

This is teaching your children to reason and think biblically. Help them think through their actions, or their fantasy, or their temptation to what's on the other side – what's the end result of that choice.

Use some coaching questions: What does God say about lying? What happens to your friendships when people find out you have

been lying? What is the end result? How is God protecting and loving us when he teaches us to tell the truth? Tell me about...

I hope you are hearing that one aspect of loving and obeying God is to pass that same love for Him on to your children!

Handout: Family Devotions Plan