

"Sir, we wish to see Jesus" — John 12:21

Things You Should Tell Your Children

Dee Bowman

Parents have lost control in far too many homes today. Oh, they provide, but I'm not at all sure many of them are providing what the children really need, even among believers. When we come to emphasize baseball and soccer to the exclusion of the Lord's work we have voluntarily surrendered control of our children. When television, the internet, and social media become the teachers, we are no longer doing the job we agreed to when we brought these little people into the world. Now, nobody is saying that it's wrong for the youngsters to participate in extra-curricular activities. In fact, these activities, properly managed, are good for our children. It's just that in far too many instances, the emphasis on these things tend to dominate not only the children's thinking, but our thinking as well.

Children are sponges. They want to know. They are looking for instruction, for examples of what is right and proper—even in their teenage years. They want to know what is important, what is valuable. It's up to us as parents—even as grandparents—to make sure that what they digest is actually what is vital for their well-being—both physically and spiritually.

I would like to suggest some things you should impress upon the minds of your children. What I want to suggest are spiritual necessities; you're already aware, I am sure, about what are their physical necessities. I believe these things not only to be important, but vital to the spiritual maturing process of every child.

Things You Should Tell Your Children:

To think about, love God. Children need to be taught early on what God says is the first and most vital commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord, the God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 22:39-40). If a child is taught to respect and admire these two commandments early on, they will likely be fine guides for life. They should be not only taught, but illustrated in the lives of parents, so that the children actually observe the actual use of these commands by their parents. And not just when they are little, either. And remember, inculcation is the key to learning, so repeat, repeat, repeat.

To be thankful. Our blessings—particularly in this nation and at this point in time—are multitudinous. Children need to know that our blessings come from God, and they need to hear us thank Him for them regularly. When children are taught early on that blessings are gifts from God, they tend to become aware of how fortunate they are instead of taking for granted all that they have. Thanksgiving should be a part of every family prayer. Paul said, in Colossians 3:15, "...and be ye thankful." David, in the 95th Psalm, said, "...let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation, let us come before his presence with thanksgiving.." It is God from whom all blessings flow. Young people need to be made aware of that—as babes, but as teenagers as well.

That true love is more than mere physical attraction. Children need to be taught early on about true love and what it actually is. As they grow, they need to be taught about the difference in love and lust. The choices they make as they mature will be made better if they have been taught that love is kind, considerate, patient, behaves properly, is not self-seeking, etc. (See I Corinthians 13). If that youngster understands true love, his choices will be better, his life easier and more enjoyable. And every child need to remember to "behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God..." (I John 3:1). What a blessing to understand true love!

To remember his influence. A youngster who has been taught that others are watching is less inclined to make mistakes; and when he does, to correct them early. One who understands that he has influence on others will be careful to let his light shine, so that others, seeing his good works, will more likely be constrained to glorify the Father (see Matthew 5:13-14). Young people need to know how to protect their influence, knowing that it is a part of character devel-

Wear Masks

Today's

Schedule

The Lord's Day

8:00 - Assembly

Parking lot - Canopy

9:15 - Assembly

Parking lot - Canopy

10:30 - Assembly

Parking lot - Canopy

opment.

To have his own faith. Children need to understand that while they may inherit certain characteristics from their parents, even monetary values, they do not and cannot inherit their faith. Faith comes from hearing the word of God— for yourself. Nobody can do that for you. (See Romans 10:17). Furthermore, everyone must rely on his own faith. Faith is critical. By it we please God and serve men. Without it we cannot be and do all that God expects of us. Children need faith-building lessons and faith-building examples at every level of their maturity.

Rearing children is not for the faint of heart, nor is it for the procrastinator. It is a work of the highest import, but one of great joy when it results in faithful children, serving the Lord with all the love and passion they received from Godly parents. But one final word of warning: every person is his own person. Some will not be faithful, regardless of the godly instruction. All we can do is the best we can do. Then pray.

Like A Little Child

Bubba Garner

My mom used to always tell me and my sisters, “Remember who your Father is.” We knew she wasn’t talking about the man watching the football game in the living room. She was referring to our relationship with our heavenly Father.

Before I am a husband or a son or a brother, I am a child of God and one whom He has “predestined to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself” (Eph. 1:5). And the blood of Christ entitles me to an eternal life-long membership in this family; “for both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Heb. 2:11). Let us, then, not be ashamed to be called His child.

Jesus said that unless you are converted and become like little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 18:1-6). What are some characteristics of little children that we can adopt?

A child depends. Over the last several years, we have witnessed through the newscasts and papers hundreds of newborn babies abandoned and left for dead in dumpsters and alleys. These infants have no chance of survival on their own because they are completely dependent upon their caretakers for food, clothing, and attention. Without someone tenderly nursing and lovingly embracing them, a child will surely die.

Yet, we in our “maturity” seem to forget that it is in Him that we “live and move and exist” (Acts 17:28). We become so impressed by our own accomplishments and achievements that we began to think that we no longer need the God Who made all of it possible. Until we realize

our helpless condition with Him, we cannot be His little children. He hears our cries in the middle of the night when no one else cares to get up and help. He carries us in His arms when we are too weak to take another step. He watches over us while we are about our day, seeing to it that our every need is met. You can depend on Him.

A child imitates. Who has not seen the commercial of the little boy helping his dad cut the grass, pushing a plastic toy lawn-mower with bubbles coming out of the top? Or how about a seven-year-old daughter who loves to put on perfume and makeup so she can be like mommy? Children will adapt to their surroundings and mimic those with whom they spend the most time. Remember parents, that goes for good habits and bad ones.

Paul said to “be imitators of God as beloved children” (Eph. 5:1). A true child of God will seek the kind of life that causes others to see that he has a lot of his Father in him. You can be holy as He is holy, merciful as He is merciful, loving as He is loving. Like Father, like Son, like son.

A child needs discipline. Easily written by a guy who doesn’t have any kids, right? Children make mistakes; they are at times defiant and disrespectful, testing their boundaries and exploring the limits of their parents’ patience. They need discipline, both preventative and corrective, to help them learn from their misconduct and weigh the options the next time a similar decision comes around. It just took one time for me to learn that I was expected to sit still during the worship services or not be able to sit at all for a week!

“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reprovved by Him; for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives” (Heb. 12:5-6). Discipline is part of discipleship, reminding us Who is in control and reinforcing the consequences that come when we disappoint our Father. It forms and molds and shapes so we can escape the ultimate punishment—an eternity in hell.

“What children are unconsciously, that Jesus requires His disciples to be voluntarily and deliberately. They are not to be pretentious and ambitious, but meek and lowly in heart; disregarding rank and distinctions, thinking not of their place in the kingdom, but giving themselves up in simplicity to the service of the King” (Alexander Balmain Bruce). God the Father is calling all of His children to come home.



Read your Bible daily