



The Baton

July 9-15, 2023

MAIN POINT

Faithful families teach their faith to the next generation.

INTRODUCTION

What is one practical thing or skill that you're thankful your mom or dad taught you when you were growing up?

Is there any practical thing or skill you wish they would have taught you? Why?

If you're a parent, what are some of the ways you teach your children practical things in life?

Whether it's how to change a tire, how to cook on the grill, how to make cookies, or how to balance a budget, parents teach children all the time, even if they don't know it. By our attitudes, words, and our actions we are constantly training our children. But if we are families of faith, we must not only teach our children how to live in the world; we must take an active role in teaching them the truth of God. Faithful families teach their faith to the next generation.

UNDERSTANDING

Did your parents teach you about God and His Word when you were growing up? If so, how did they do it?

What are some of the ways you are actively teaching your faith to the next generation?

Families are one of the primary means God has given to us through which faith is meant to be taught. He emphasized the active and continuous nature of this teaching in the book of Deuteronomy.

READ [DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9](#).

Why do you think God told His people not just to love Him, but to love Him with all their hearts, souls, and strength? What was He trying to emphasize?

Why is loving God with your whole self important if you want to teach faith to your children?

We can't teach what we don't know ourselves. And we can't help our kids love God with everything they are unless we know what that means ourselves. So, God told His people to love Him, and then as they love Him, to teach the next generation to do the same.

Why is it important for parents to see their responsibility for their kids and at the same time, help kids see that they are responsible for their own choices?

How can that happen?

What was the truth parents were to teach their children?

How were they supposed to teach these truths?

What do you think it means to “impress” God’s commandments on your children (v. 7)?

God wanted this faith teaching not only to be something that happens at a scheduled time; He wanted it to be ingrained in the culture of the family. These verses emphasize the regular and continuous effort at teaching the faith. This teaching happens when you get up, when you go to sleep, when you’re inside the house and outside of it.

Why is consistency so important in teaching faith?

What are some everyday opportunities you can take hold of in order to teach your kids?

What about scheduled times?

Is your schedule too crowded for things like a daily devotion time?

In verses 7-9, there are some teaching methods that might sound strange to us. We don’t usually bind God’s Word on our hands or put it as a symbol on our foreheads. The bigger principle here is one of consistency. That’s how we impress God’s commands on our children—it’s through consistently and regularly talking about them and living them out together as a family.

What would this kind of teaching look like today?

READ [PROVERBS 22:6](#).

Does this verse mean that children in godly homes never leave the faith or make bad choices? If not, what does it mean?

Why is this an important verse to hang onto? How can it help you persevere as a parent?

Each of us, including our children, are ultimately responsible for our own actions. Parents are not responsible for the choices their children make; however they are responsible for modeling and teaching them what it means to live Christian lives. Proverbs 22:6 isn’t a promise that children from Christian homes will never make bad choices; it describes, however, the way the family is meant to work. By following God’s Word, we can raise children who avoid evil and serve God faithfully.

For you, right now, what is the most challenging part when you think about taking a more active role in teaching faith to your family?

As parents, we can’t shirk our responsibility. It is our job to raise our children in a godly way. We must actively do this; we can’t hope the church or the schools will take our place. Faithful families teach their faith in a consistent way to the next generation.

APPLICATION

What is one way you are going to consistently talk about the commandments of God in your home this week?

What, specifically, can we pray about for your family and children right now?

What is one way you can more consistently pray for your children and their faith?

PRAYER

Pray and thank God that He is the perfect Father. Pray that the parents in our church would embrace their responsibility to parent their children in a godly way. Also pray for any of the specific requests from the families in your group.

COMMENTARY

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9

6:4. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 is arguably the best-known passage of Scripture in ancient and modern Judaism. Deuteronomy 6:4 begins with the Hebrew verb rendered listen (shema), and these verses are commonly referred to as the Shema. These verses make two important declarations about God and His people's obligation to Him. The first declaration is a statement about the uniqueness of Israel's God. The assertion is that the Lord ... is one. The word rendered the Lord is, of course, God's personal name, Yahweh. Declaring that Yahweh is one denotes there is no other existing Deity. People might worship other so-called gods, but those gods are not real. They are worthless fabrications of human minds ([Isaiah 44:10-11](#)).

6:5. The second declaration is that God's people are commanded to love the Lord. When Jesus was asked about the greatest commandment in the law, He responded by quoting this verse ([Mark 12:30](#)). The first thing to analyze in this command is the verb rendered love.

The measure of our love for God is to be greater than all other affections. We are to love Him wholeheartedly ("all your heart"). The biblical conception and use of the term heart differs at points from modern usage. The term does not refer primarily to the fleshly organ but rather to the core of our inner, spiritual being. Heart refers to the power of the mind to think and remember ([Deuteronomy 4:9](#)). Heart also refers to our volition in making decisions ([Exodus 7:13](#)). Thus to love God with all our heart means to choose Him above all other desires and to make Him our highest priority life. Likewise, we're to love God with all our soul. The Hebrew term rendered soul can refer to physical appetites ([Job 33:20](#)), emotions ([Job 30:25](#)), and the spiritual nature ([Psalm 19:7](#)). A supreme love for God results in submitting every human appetite and desire to His will. Finally, we are to love God with all our strength. This term refers to every talent and resource we possess. We are to give our best efforts in serving and worshiping the Lord.

6:6-7. Families are instructed to bequeath the ways of God to the next generations. However, parents and grandparents cannot teach what they themselves do not know and practice. A passionate devotion to the Lord must first be in the parents' and grandparents' hearts. Only then are they equipped to help instill a genuine love for God in younger lives. Primary responsibility for teaching children spiritual truth cannot be delegated by parents to others. Parents have a unique relationship with their children and a responsibility to teach them about God in daily life (when you sit in your house ... walk along the road,...lie down and... get up). Church attendance is vitally important for children's overall spiritual development,

but participation in church activities can never substitute for the daily spiritual instruction children need from godly parents.

6:8-9. The need for individuals and families to focus daily on the ways of God is emphasized with the commands to bind God's commands on one's hand and forehead. In addition they were to be written on the door posts of their houses and gates. In New Testament-era Judaism, these commands were observed literally by attaching small boxes containing various Scriptures to the hand and forehead.

PROVERBS 22:6

22:6 "Teach" is literally to "dedicate" something, such as a building—to have a celebration commemorating the first time it is put to its intended use ([Deuteronomy 20:5](#); [1 Kings 8:63](#)). Here, the youth is consecrated to a life of godly wisdom ([4:11](#)). "Youth" typically refers to pre-teen to late-teen years. The Hebrew words translated "about the way he should go" speak of orienting the initiation to fit the challenges of young people. Youth are known for foolishness and lack of discretion or sense ([v. 15](#); [1:4](#); [7:7](#)); left to themselves, they fall into disgrace ([29:15,21](#)). Thus, if a youth is initiated in a manner that is appropriate to his age ([1:4](#); [23:13](#)), it is likely to stick with him. However, this is not a promise, and it does not make the teacher responsible for the student ([Ezekiel 18:20](#)).