

## **A Godly Family, Part 9: Dad Teaching and Leading Spiritually**

*Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church on September 30, 2012*

[www.goldcountrybaptist.org](http://www.goldcountrybaptist.org)

The 2 NT commands for parents are simple and straightforward: Col 3:21 *Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart* [or “become discouraged” NIV]

Eph 6:4 adds ... *do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

Christian parenting is not incredibly complicated, it's clear and it's captured in 2 simple verses that are easy to understand. It's hard work, but it's not hard to understand. It's simple, but not simplistic – there is profound deep truth in the phrase *instruction of the Lord*. We're to not provoke or exasperate our children, but are instead to lovingly discipline them and raise them in the instruction of Jesus.

Elyse Fitzpatrick, an experienced mother and biblical counselor, in her book *Give Them Grace*, points out that Paul does not say “the instruction of the law,” but “instruction of the Lord,” meaning the Lord Jesus and what He taught in the gospel of grace. She writes: ‘Recently I was having a conversation with a mom who is trying to wrestle through the implications of grace in her parenting methods and responsibilities. She admitted that she had read too many books. She had exhausted herself trying to be a good mom and meet all the needs of all her children, raising them for the Lord ... she homeschooled and baked bread and made their clothes. They avoided television. They read books only from the 1800s. Now, in the middle of all her pain and exhaustion, she's trying to embrace grace but continues to be crippled by fear and guilt. “I wish I had never read all those books,” she admitted. “I feel guilty and exhausted all the time.” I asked her, “How would you raise your children if all you had was the Bible?” “Well, I guess I would love them, discipline them, and tell them about Jesus.” I smiled and answered, “Right.”’<sup>1</sup>

Ephesians 6:4 tells Christian parents to love/nurture/bring up their children, discipline them, and teach them about the Lord Jesus. It's how faithful Christians for centuries raised their children, using the Bible, in the context of Christian community, without psychology or pseudo-Christian books or so-called experts or any “super-nanny,” Scripture was sufficient.

Until the 1960s there were few parenting books by Christians, but since the 1970s there have been literally thousands of Christian books on parenting, with over 100 new ones published every year, covering topics from biblical breast-feeding to scriptural principles for potty training all the way to courtship and arranged marriages. Here's a sampling of Amazon books tagged as Christian parenting:

*1-2-3 Magic: Effective Discipline for Children 2-12*

*-10 Days to a Less Defiant Child: Breakthrough Program*

*-How to Change Your Child's Attitude, Behavior & Character in 5 Days*

*-How to Have a Better-Behaved Child from Birth to Age Ten* [what happens after 10?]

-subtitle: *135 tools for raising caring, responsible children without time-out, spanking, punishment ... (the publisher promises “tells you EXACTLY what to do in the moment, for every type of behavior...50 pages of handy charts ...”)*

A fellow dad and pastor Kevin DeYoung writes: ‘Does it seem like parenting has gotten more complicated? I mean, as far as I can tell, back in the day parents basically tried to feed their kids, clothe them, and keep them away from explosives. Now our kids have to sleep on their backs (no wait, their tummies; no never mind, their backs), while listening to Baby Mozart surrounded by scenes of Starry, Starry Night. They have to be in piano lessons before they are five and can’t leave the car seat until they’re about five foot six ... I worry that many young parents are a) too adamant about the particulars of their parenting or b) too sure that every decision will set their kids on an unalterable trajectory to heaven or hell ... Could it be we’ve made parenting too complicated? ... I could be wrong. My kids are still young. Maybe this no-theory is a theory of its own. I just know that the longer I parent the more I want to focus on doing a few things really well...I want to spend time with my kids, teach them the Bible, take them to church, laugh with them, cry with them, discipline them when they disobey, say sorry when I mess up, and pray like crazy. I want them to look back and think, “I’m not sure what my parents were doing or if they even knew what they were doing. But I always knew my parents loved me and I knew they loved Jesus.” Maybe it’s not that complicated after all.’<sup>2</sup>

The NT commands to parents are not that complicated. It’s hard work being a parent, but it’s not hard to understand what God calls us to, it’s right in this text. Last week we looked at the negative in Ephesians 6:4 (don’t provoke to anger) and the first part of the positive (bring them up in discipline) and today we’ll look at the last part, “instruction of the Lord,” (which is not 50 complicated charts, magic steps, guaranteed programs, it’s gospel Christianity applied). It’s the Great Commission at the end of Matthew 28 applied to parents: *make disciples* of your children ... *teaching them to obey all the Lord Jesus commanded* (i.e., “the instruction of the Lord”).

Simple outline for the simple (but not simplistic) task of parenting:

1. The Responsibility of Biblical Instruction
2. The Resources for Biblical Instruction

**#1. The Responsibility of Biblical Instruction.**

Who does God hold responsible for kids “instruction of the Lord”?

NOT THE GOVERNMENT – this task is not the responsibility of government, though pagan governments through history have been more than happy to give children *instruction in their gods*, just as Moses was indoctrinated and “*instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*” (Acts 7:22 ESV, being raised in that society’s system) and Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego the Babylonian government tried to deprogram all their biblical upbringing and worldview.

NOT THE STATE – it doesn’t mean Christians can’t go to a State school for education in other areas. Secular degrees or diplomas are not prohibited by this verse. I’m not against all State-run education (though we need much wisdom in our State!). Christians differ on the who, what, where, when, and how of State school – some keep kids at home till age 18, others let them go to junior college at 16, some go to Sac State or to secular college, others Christian college assuming they’re safe (but not all “Christian” ones are) – the point of v. 4 has to do with the *responsibility* of the “*instruction of the Lord*” in Eph 6:4, which is clearly not the State’s job or jurisdiction.

NOT THE VILLAGE – it doesn’t take a village to raise a child, as Mrs. Clinton suggested in her famous book. God’s plan for raising children is Eph 6:4.

NOT EXTENDED FAMILY – it’s not their job to raise your kids

NOT THE DAYCARE – It doesn’t say “*daycares*, bring them up”

NOT THE SCHOOL – not even Christian schools. Eph 6:4 doesn’t say “*Christian school teachers*, bring children up in the instruction of the Lord.” I’m not against Christian schools, charter schools, or co-ops, but I’m saying God’s Word doesn’t place the responsibility for discipling your kids *on the school*, whichever school they’re in.

NOT THE CHURCH – The text does not say “*children’s worker*, bring up people’s children at church in the instruction of the Lord”

- This verse isn’t for the children’s ministry (SS, AWANA)
- This verse doesn’t address youth groups. It’s not ‘drop your teens at the curb, youth guy’s job to give the Word’)
- This verse is not about kids sitting in a room watching Christian entertainment. Singing vegetables do not fulfill this mandate. Silly songs with Larry the avocado aren’t “the instruction of the Lord.” No, I’m not against videos, but they can’t fulfill this verse!
- This verse is not addressed to “pastors” (I’m not against some of those other things any more than I’m against myself, but I am pointing out whose responsibility it is to raise your kids in the instruction of the Lord, and it’s not mine or the church’s)

NOT EVEN MOTHERS PRIMARILY – This last one may be a surprise to some of you who were with me up until now. Eph 6:4 does not begin with “mothers” and it doesn’t even begin with “parents.” Who is verse 4 addressed to? Say it out loud: **Fathers**. God calls dads to personally actively disciple, teach Bible to their kids. In context Paul has already used a specific word for “parents” in v. 1 that he doesn’t use in v. 4. Paul doesn’t say “parents” in v. 4 and he also doesn’t say “*father and mother*” like he did in v. 2. We can’t neglect the fact he specifically singularly says *Fathers* in v. 4

Yes, it’s true that *parents* are responsible to discipline and disciple their children, but more specifically, it’s “Fathers” here and in Col. 3:21 (the 2 commands for parents in the NT). This responsibility is given to dad first and foremost to biblically instruct his children. Again, as I’ve said several times in this series, this is challenging and convicting, and if I wasn’t committed to teaching through the Bible verse-by-verse slowly and carefully, paying attention to individual words, I could avoid the implication of this, but I can’t because there it is and here we are. The father is the one addressed by God’s Word as ultimately responsible for his kid’s discipline and instruction in the Lord, and as dads we cannot say “yeah, but…” we need to step up.

Keeping my kids home with mom doesn’t complete my role in v. 4 – that’s not to say my wife can’t come alongside to help fulfill this verse, it doesn’t mean other believers can’t help, whether in a school setting, or in a church family, or extended family, but v. 4 holds the man uniquely and primarily responsible as head of his home (5:23) for his family’s instruction in the Lord, including his wife (5:26, her sanctification in the Word as well). He was not with his children 24/7 in Bible times, nor is dad in modern times, but that doesn’t change his responsibility.

Turn back to Genesis 2 and I want you to see this pattern of the instruction of the Lord coming through the head of the family, it's always been God's design, even 6,000+ years ago in perfect Eden, even though the man needs help and has help to fulfill what God calls him to.

Gen 2:18 *Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.*

And so He creates a wife for the man in v. 21-24 and this is the key passage and foundation for marriage and family and parenting and the gospel picture of the church as the bride of Christ her head. The husband is the head, and the wife is his helper/helpmate fit for him. She comes alongside to help in what God calls the man to do. She helps him fulfill his calling (including Eph 6:4). She may have greater *ability* in some areas, but he has the greater *responsibility*.

Look back at Gen 2:15: *Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.*<sup>16</sup> **The LORD God commanded the man,** saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;<sup>17</sup> but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat ...

Just stop there for a moment. Eve is not created till v. 22. It's the *man* in v. 15 who God puts in charge of the garden, Adam. It's the *man* in v. 16-17 who is given the command. And it is the *man* who God holds responsible for the area of responsibility God gives him. God could have created both of them and taught them together, but He instead teaches the man and expects the man to teach his wife what God told him as spiritual leader of his family.

Genesis 3:9 *Then the LORD God called to the man [not the couple], and said to him [not her], "Where are you [masc. singular]?"*<sup>10</sup> *He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself."*<sup>11</sup> *And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"*<sup>12</sup> *The man said, "The woman ..."*

God holds the man singularly uniquely primarily responsible for what happens in the domain God has given him charge over, and any attempts to pass the buck or blame or shirk responsibility can't cut it before God. It's not just the serpent who didn't have a leg to stand on ... Adam could run but couldn't hide from what God had called him to do and be, and neither can we. Abdicating headship and trying the blame game doesn't cover any better than fig leaves. God holds us accountable as fathers, as heads of our home, and we can't say "the woman ... she's with the kids more, that's her job."

Male headship is 'a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead ... a God-given *trust* for the good of...a calling...a duty and obligation and charge...The word "responsibility" is chosen to imply that man will be uniquely called to account for his leadership ... God says to Adam first, "Where are you?" Eve had sinned first, but God does not seek her out first. Adam must give the first account to God for the moral life of the family ...'<sup>3</sup>

This is sobering, brothers, and it's why we need another Man or we'll remain like our first father. Gen. 3 points us to our need for a 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam, because all mankind fail like the first Adam. And this chapter not only has the bad news, but the good news. It not only points to our sin and need for Christ to come, this chapter gives the first prophecy of the Christ to come in 3:15.

The end of v. 15 speaks of the serpent/Satan wounding the heel of this seed of woman (Jesus on the cross) but He crushes Satan's head and power. This is the first gospel, as theologians call it. The good news for sinful men is that another Man came and took responsibility for all under His headship to lead them and teach them "*in the instruction of the Lord*" like Ephesians 6:4 says, because He is the Lord. The sin that Romans 5 holds Adam responsible for, Romans 6-8 gives us the remedy for in Christ in the gospel, the good news of a 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam who came to restore what the first one messed up, which all of us inherited as equally responsible, equally guilty sinners.

It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God if our sins are not covered, a God who says to us all "what have *you* done?" Good works are fig leaves. Pointing to others who we think sinned worse than us won't work. God calls us individually to account for our responsibility and sin, and His Christ's righteousness alone can cover it. If you've made excuses for your sin, take ownership and responsibility, and repent, so your sin and shame can be covered.

In v. 22 it says the Lord clothed them with animal skins, which would require the death of an animal (animals tend not to give up their skin while they're alive). The original readers of the OT would pick up on the terms in v. 22 as part of the sacrificial system of the OT, animals, covering. Blood was required as the payment for sin, and God graciously allows a substitute slain instead of sinners always instantly dying for sin as we deserve. It's a picture that later readers of the Bible could understand, the Christ promised in v. 15 must also be a substitute for us, dying for us and clothing us like v. 22 with His righteousness to cover sin's shame.

Adam as a dad evidently taught his boys about sacrifices/worship, as it's the first thing we read his sons doing in chapter 4, and it's the first thing Noah leads his family in worship post-flood:

Gen 8:18 *So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife ...<sup>20</sup> Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.*

Look at Genesis 12, God calling Abram to lead his family. In the end of 12:3 He says all families will be blessed through Abram's, and as Abram leads his family in v. 4-6 to the promised land, 12:7: *The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.<sup>8</sup> Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there **he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD.***

**13:1** *So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, he and his wife and all that belonged to him, and Lot with him ...<sup>4</sup> to the place of the altar which he had made there formerly; and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.* [Hebrew for worship, and many scholars say this included proclaiming God's Word or name, which meant His character or attributes. So as he leads his family, he is also leading them in worship, prayers, proclamations, perhaps a reminder of the purpose of sacrifice passed on from his fathers]

Our spiritual forefathers spoke of family worship as a family altar, a place where the priest of the home leads his family calling on name of Lord. In the end of 13:13 Abram builds another altar. He's the priest of his family. Look at Genesis 18:17 where this calling is even more explicit: *The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do ...*

18:19 *For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.*"

Same pattern with Abraham as with Adam and Noah: God gives the man the "instruction of the Lord" directly, and then the man is responsible to give the Lord's commands to his family as he leads them in worship and in the ways of the Lord.

When God calls Israel, the descendants of Father Abraham out of Egypt, he tells fathers to lead their family in worship, including the 'instruction of the Lord':

Ex 12:25 *"When you enter the land which the LORD will give you, as He has promised, you shall observe this ... [speaking of the worship around the table at Passover].<sup>26</sup> "And when your children say to you, 'What does this rite mean to you?'<sup>27</sup> you shall say, 'It is a Passover sacrifice to the LORD who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared our homes.' And the people bowed low and worshiped.*

Part of the worship of Israel in their families (context of v. 3 is for each "father's household" it says) was the expectation that the dad would give his children "instruction of the Lord," teaching them of the great story of the redemption of God's people and how God's grace through a sacrifice and blood covering delivered His people.

Exodus 13:8: *you shall tell your son in that day, saying, 'This is done because of what the LORD did ... [context is explaining why their family worships the way it does, what redemption means] ...<sup>14</sup> So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is this?' that you shall say to him [it says tell of redemption] ...*

In Deuteronomy 32 we see from the same pattern toward the end of the book of Moses of God's truth being passed down by fathers, like Eph 6:4 *bring them up in the instruction of the Lord...*

Deut 32:7 *"Remember the days of old, Consider the years of all generations. Ask your father, and he will inform you..."* [father is expected to give 'instruction of the Lord']

Deut 32:46 *he said to them, "Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which you shall command your sons to observe carefully ... all the words of this law."<sup>47</sup> "For it is not an idle word for you; indeed it is your life.*

The life of God's people in a pagan land depends on this, and our land is becoming more and more like pagan Canaan. Our country is unraveling, and I believe it's not mainly because prayer was taken out of public schools, but more of prayer or family worship not being a part of private homes. I don't think atheists getting the 10 commandments taken down off public buildings is the main reason our society is spiritually dying ... it's more that Christian homes are not teaching the 10 commandments to their children or the gospel. I would bet you that most of the people up in arms and protesting efforts to remove the 10 Commandments from a building, if you were to ask those people if they can name the 10 Commandments, I would be surprised if 1 in 10 could name all 10, and probably most can only name half, and even less disciplining their children.

When 75-88% of children in Christian churches don't continue the faith of their parents, the problem isn't what's going on out there in society, it's what's not going on in the family.<sup>4</sup> The solution is not political (looking to Congress, Senate, House of Representatives, rather than looking to our own house where revival must start, and then the house of God). The solution is not pastoral (more youth stuff or camps or events to keep kids interested) it's paternal, fatherly instruction of the Lord, according to the Lord's instruction in Scripture.

In Joshua 4, as Israel is preparing to go into the pagan promised land, this pattern of children looking to their dad for instruction of the Lord is continued and expected from fathers:

Josh 4:21 *He said to the sons of Israel, "When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, 'What are these stones?'"<sup>22</sup> then you [speaking to fathers] shall inform your children ...<sup>24</sup> that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, so that you may fear the LORD your God forever."*

Psalm 34:10 (NIV): *young lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.* <sup>11</sup> *Come, **my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD ...*** <sup>13</sup> ***keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies ...*** <sup>18</sup> ***The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.***

This is a father giving his children "the instruction of the Lord," and leading them in worship, as v. 3 says "*magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.*" The children are called to praise the Lord by dad, together with dad, and in v. 8 he calls them to "*taste and see that the Lord is good.*" As he gathers the children to listen to him teach the instruction of the Lord, this man after the heart of God doesn't just want his children to gather around a table to taste and see a good supper, but to taste and see a good Savior! The image of Psalm 128:3 is children around your table growing, including spiritually, the blessing of a dad who teaches his children

Ps 44:1: *O God, we have heard with our ears, **Our fathers have told us The work that You did...***

Ps 78:3 ... *we have heard and known, And our fathers have told us.* <sup>4</sup> ***We will not conceal them [the things of God] from their children, But tell to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, And His strength and His wondrous works that He has done.*** <sup>5</sup> ***For He established a testimony in Jacob And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers That they should teach them to their children,*** <sup>6</sup> ***That the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, That they may arise and tell them to their children,*** <sup>7</sup> ***That they should put their confidence in God ...***

The Jewish scholar A. Edersheim and expert on ancient biblical background and patterns writes: 'it was the father who was "bound to teach his son." To impart to the child knowledge of [God's Law] conferred as great spiritual distinction ... Every other engagement, even the necessary meal, should give place to this paramount duty ... That man was of the profane vulgar (an *Am haarets*), who had sons, but failed to bring them up in knowledge of the Law.'<sup>5</sup> Even in recent centuries, fathers who failed to bring up children by instructing them in the Lord, as Eph 6:4 commands, by regular family worship, teaching and leading his children, if the dad was a member of the church of Scotland, the dad was to be brought under church discipline.

If that father continued to neglect biblically instructing their children, he could be excommunicated, put out of the church of Scotland publically (Mt 18:17).<sup>6</sup>

The importance of “family religion” as Matthew Henry called it, or “family worship” as many in early America called it, has come a long way from the original settlers of the colony in Salem whose 1629 covenant was ““Promising also unto our best ability to teach our children and servants the knowledge of God, and of His Will, that they may serve Him also.”

In 1733, Philadelphia Presbyterians were concerned about declining religion, and so they urged revival of family religion in homes. To George Whitefield, family worship was essential to the Great Awakening, so he called every father to regularly give his household the instruction of the Lord (Eph 6:4). Jonathan Edwards said in his farewell sermon if ‘family education ... fail, all other means are likely to prove ineffectual.’ As late as 1845, some Southern Presbyterians refused serving communion to dads who ‘habitually neglected’ teaching their kids the Bible and leading them spiritually. They wrote ‘God lays on the man, as the head of the family, the chief responsibility for the performance of these requirements... and will not sanction the delegation of this responsibility to the wife...school, or to any other agency.’<sup>7</sup>

‘Nancy Gibbs, writing in *Time* magazine ...“From the Reformation until the 1830’s most parenting manuals were written for fathers ... In [a 2003 Swiss] study when both father and mother attended church regularly, 33 percent of their children ended up as regular church-goers. But when the father was nonpracticing, and the mother a regular church attender, only 2 percent of their children became regular worshippers [but if dad attends without mom, 44%].’<sup>8</sup>

We’ve seen The Responsibility of Biblical Instruction ... what are some Resources for Biblical Instruction (#2)?

This isn’t something we can cover all today, it’s something we could take weeks to study as men. Guess what? We can, and Lord-willing we will. Starting in 2 weeks from yesterday, Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>, Verne Nakasone at our men’s breakfast will be kicking off a men’s study with a message on how the gospel shapes fathers and then Lord-willing every other Saturday after I want to invite us fathers to a study based on Voddie Baucham’s *Family Shepherds: Equipping Men To Lead Their Families* (schedule and dates TBD). If you want to be a part, I encourage you to get the book even now and if you’re older or not yet a dad, we can iron-sharpen together.

Handout in bulletin – with this book and other resources for fathers

1. **The Gospel** (Pastor Verne will talk more about this at the men’s breakfast)
2. **The book of Proverbs** (turn to Proverbs 4)

When Paul says “fathers, bring them up in instruction of the Lord” that is language right out of the opening chapters of Proverbs. It’s a resource book for parents highlighting a multi-generational pattern of “the instruction of the Lord” from father to children to repeat it, and we see Solomon continuing the pattern of his father David. In Prov 4:1, Solomon writes: *Hear, O sons, the instruction of a father* [very similar language to Eph 6:4] ...



<sup>3</sup> *When I was a son to my father, Tender and the only son in the sight of my mother,* <sup>4</sup> *Then he taught me and said to me, “Let your heart hold fast my words...*

If you wonder what does “fathers, bring them up in the instruction of the Lord” look like, that Paul commands in Eph 6:4, we’ve just seen it, in Israel’s history, and much of Proverbs models it for us. In Prov 1:8, mothers also have a helping part: *Hear, my son, your **father’s instruction**, and do not forsake your mother’s teaching.*

### 3. Deuteronomy 6 (family devotions and discipleship)

Dt 6:2 (ESV) says we’re to fear God ...*you **and your son and your son’s son**, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments ...*<sup>7</sup> *You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house...*(kids around the table, Ps 128:3)

Family devotion resources: [Jesus Storybook Bible](#), [Gospel Story Bible](#), [ESV Illustrated Family Bible](#), [Truth & Grace Books](#) (includes verses, songs to sing, child catechism, etc.)

... *and when you walk by the way* (or drive in minivan even today!)

Family discipleship: learning AWANA verses, opportunity for this, after AWANA, asking what they learned, counsel time message was on? SS resources in the bulletin, ex:

#### **Today’s Sunday School Lesson for GCBC Kids**

Passage: God Punishes Judah – 2 Kings 21-25

Principle: Believers will fear God, who hates and punishes all sin.

**Prompt: Ask your children these questions:**

- Why did God punish Judah?**
- What did God promise would happen after Israel repented?**

**Practice: Help your child apply these truths:**

- Hate sin as God hates sin.**
- Repent from sin and ask God for forgiveness.**

**This week, as a family read: 2 Kings 21-25**

**Next week: God Shows Mercy to Jonah and Nineveh – Jonah 1-4**

Read ahead for next week. Bulletins are emailed out now, so you can also read ahead Scripture readings, the sermon passage for morning and evening, practice songs w/ kids (get a hymnal, even better if a family member can play)

If you drive children to and from places, talk about truths and pray with them before you drop them off somewhere. Go on a hike and talk about creation and truths of Scripture.

*and when you lie down, and when you rise ...*

Before bed can be another time to supplement more formal family devotions or more informal discipleship times, pray

God’s truth should mark our homes is the main idea of v. 9: *You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

If you're not already doing something like this after a meal or in a time when your family gathers, start small and keep it short, talk and pray with your wife first about family devotions/discipleship, and times that work for you, read a portion of Scripture to your family, other books can help but at least this book, talk about it (Eph 6:4), sing some songs your kids know, spend time praying. Family worship may include more, but at least singing (Eph 5:19), scripture read, some "instruction of Lord" (6:4), and prayer (6:18)

Fathers, let's be teaching and leading spiritually, looking to Christ, whose forerunner came "*to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord*" (Lk 1:17). Let's step up to our responsibilities, by the grace of our Father in heaven. These things need to first be "on our hearts" (Dt. 6:6) hearts that love the Lord our God (Dt. 6:5). Eph 6:4 says to "*Fathers ... bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*" Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Elyse Fitzpatrick and Jessica Thompson, *Give Them Grace: Dazzling Your Kids with the Love of Jesus* (Crossway, 2011), p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevindeyoung/2011/05/10/parenting-001/>

<sup>3</sup> John Piper, "A Vision of Biblical Complementarity," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Crossway, 1991), p. 36-37.

<sup>4</sup> For the source of those statistics and a compelling call to return to parental and paternal discipleship, I highly recommend Voddie Baucham's message "The Centrality of the Home in the Evangelism and Discipleship of the Next Generation," <http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=5209234630>

<sup>5</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Vol. 1, p. 230.

<sup>6</sup> Kerry Ptacek, "A Brief History of Biblical Family Worship," *Table Talk* (November 1997) and <http://www.graceonlinelibrary.org/home-family/family-worship/a-brief-history-of-biblical-family-worship-by-kerry-ptacek/>

<sup>7</sup> The examples in this paragraph are all cited in above.

<sup>8</sup> William Farley, *Gospel-Powered Parentings*, citing *Time* (June 28, 1993), p. 53, and *Touchstone* (2003): Robbie Low, "The Truth About Men and Church," online at <http://touchstonemag.com/archives/print.php?id=16-05-024-v>