

## **Practical Tips for Parents Who Want to Make a Spiritual Impact on Their Children**

### **Introduction:**

1. No doubt, parents are the primary influence in their children's lives. Just by virtue of being their parents, they have influence unlike anybody else.
2. Because of this, every parent must seize this opportunity and be the primary **spiritual** influence in their children's lives. Many parents desire to teach their children about spiritual things, but fear paralyzes them.
  - "Where do I begin? I'm untrained. What do I do?"
3. There are basically three different ways that parents impart to their children Biblical principles, character lessons, and spiritual truth.

### **First, by simply living as a godly example in your daily life**

- The child sees the parents in a wide variety of situations – doing household chores, relaxing at home, relating to other family members, helping with homework, talking on the phone, etc.
- What does the child observe when he sees his parents in these various circumstances?

### **Second, by spontaneously using teachable moments**

- This is a shared experience between a parent and child in which application of a Biblical principle or insight can be made. These moments come every day in our lives, and we need to take advantage of them and teach our children.

### **Third, by planned family devotion time**

- This is the one we want to really focus on in this lesson because this involves the parents **intentionally** implementing a plan to teach their children about God and the Bible. This is so crucial.
  - There is no glorious secret to having a devotion time with your children. It is simply you taking a few moments each day to read the Bible as a family, discuss the verse, find out if anybody has a prayer request, and then praying together.
4. Here are some practical tips that will help you as you seek to establish family devotion time:
    - A. Keep it short and simple
      - It needn't be over 3 to 5 minutes (unless of course it spontaneously turns into more).
    - B. It should be practical and applicable
      - Explain how a Bible verse relates to the children's everyday lives.
      - Example: If your verse deals with honesty, ask your children to give you some examples of dishonesty at school.
    - C. It must be planned
      - Having a regular time each day really helps (after supper, before bedtime, after they are tucked in, when dad gets home from work, etc).
      - Naturally, it will probably change from time to time, but having a regular time will help everybody to remember and make it a habit.
      - You can change the location though (living room, porch, a park) – that's fun!
    - D. Give everybody a chance to talk.

- Mom or dad may lead, but ask questions that encourage feedback and interaction. The parents facilitate the discussion, but everybody feels free to participate and give input.
  - As your children get older, allow them to lead the devotion from time to time.
- E. Read the verse ahead of time - think and pray about what you might share.
- Don't be afraid to share a personal story from your childhood or from yesterday at work! Kids love it when their parents share these stories.
- F. Don't be afraid to use different methods from time to time
- A personal story, a picture, some type of humor, an object lesson of some sort, a family memory, an event from the current news, etc.

### **Potential Dangers to Avoid**

#### 1. Making it a legalistic law

- There may be times when you miss a night – its okay!! You got home late, family members are sick, an emergency arose, etc.
- Don't allow it to be a law hanging over your head. This will take the joy out of it. Do your best to keep it a regular part of your family schedule, but if you miss a night, don't put yourself under condemnation.

#### 2. Making it an ax-grinding session

- Family devotion time should not turn into the time when the parents put their children in their place and use the Bible as a club to punish their children. This is not discipline time, and so it is not the time to bring up their mistakes and failures of the day.
- Don't allow siblings to be accusing and corrective towards each other either.
- Keep it positive and fun.

#### 3. Making it too long

- Don't allow family devotion time to become a long and drawn out thing each night that everybody begins to dread. It is up to the parents to make sure things keep moving and don't get bogged down.