



STUDYING & PRAYING TOGETHER

Growing Closer to God as a Family

Every relationship requires ongoing communication to stay close. Our spiritual relationship with God and Christ is no different than our physical relationships with our spouse and children—meaning we must be in continuous, loving contact with each other to be close. With God, this closeness is achieved spiritually through Bible study and prayer.

God speaks to us

One of the primary ways God communicates with us is through our study of Scripture. As we read the Bible, God shares His thoughts, character, plan, vision and even correction with us: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). The phrase “given by inspiration of God” is widely thought to be derived from a Greek word meaning “divinely breathed” (Strong’s G2315). So Scripture is quite appropriately described as God talking to us!

Jesus stated, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). There are two vital principles we can teach our children about this scripture.



We must feed daily on God’s words to maintain our spiritual strength and discernment.

One principle to learn from this scripture is that if we want to spiritually thrive, we must take in spiritual food provided by God through His Word. If we don’t eat physical food (“bread”) each day, our bodies will become weaker and more lethargic until there is no energy left to carry on. We eat physical food to stay physically strong.

The same is true of our spiritual lives. We must feed daily on God’s words to maintain our spiritual strength and discernment. Lack of daily Bible study will leave us weak, dull and vulnerable. To keep up our spiritual strength and to live as a Christian family, the family needs to take in a daily Bible study or reading of Scripture. Let this be an exciting adventure to learn new things each day from the Word of God together!



The second principle we can draw from [Matthew 4:4](#) is that Jesus was prepared to respond. He repelled Satan's temptation by first saying, "It is written." This shows us that Jesus knew the Scriptures and could combat Satan by responding with the very words of God. As a family dedicated to God, we should be reading, studying and internalizing Scripture so we can respond when Satan attacks.

It is our responsibility to impart the Word of God to our children and to help them understand the spiritual principles to live by each day.



Setting daily study goals

We all want our children to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," learning it from their youth ([2 Peter 3:18](#)). We all want to teach our children to walk according to Scripture—the knowledge, understanding and wisdom of God—rather than to lean on their own understanding ([Proverbs 3:5](#)). Listening to God regularly through Bible study will help accomplish this.

Here are some practical tips on how to encourage daily Bible study, bringing your children up in the "training and admonition of the Lord" ([Ephesians 6:4](#)):

Read and explain a passage or section of Scripture to "make known [God's] truth to the children" ([Isaiah 38:19](#)).

Reinforce godly behavior with encouragement rather than by focusing only on ungodly behavior. Encouraging godly character "sows righteousness" ([Proverbs 11:18](#)).

While watching TV or observing events in life, ask your children if the show or event is displaying godly character or not, thereby assisting them in developing discernment ([Psalm 119:18](#); [Hebrews 5:14](#)).

Read a chapter of [Proverbs](#) each day that corresponds to the day of the month (read chapter 1 on May 1, chapter 2 on May 2, and so on) and discuss key scriptures at the end of the day.

We are to be sharpening both our and our children's spiritual swords every day by reading and discussing the Word of God ([Hebrews 4:12](#)). If we don't sharpen the sword each day, it becomes dull and ineffective. As spiritual leaders, it is our responsibility to impart the Word of God to our children and to help them understand the spiritual principles to live by each day. In doing so, we help them:



Stand apart from the world so that they will not walk in the path of the wicked (Psalm 1:1; Proverbs 4:14-15).

Hold on to true doctrine (Ephesians 4:14).

Know the difference between the holy and unholy (Leviticus 10:10).

Receive instruction in wisdom (Proverbs 4:11).

Receive instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16).

The Christian family prays together

While it is important to study the Bible daily and listen to the words of God, we should also be in contact with God in prayer throughout each day. Christ set the example for us when He taught his disciples how to pray (Matthew 6:6-13).

Pray with your children at the end of the day, doing so each night, if possible.

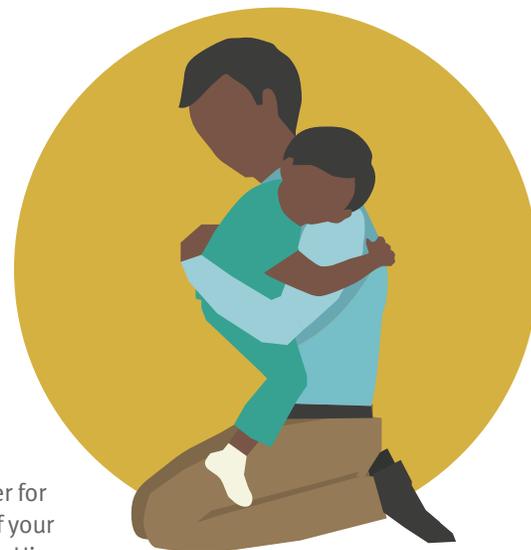
We should likewise teach our children how to pray. Set the example of prayer for your children so they see you in daily prayer. They will see the importance of your relationship with God as evidenced by the daily conversations you have with Him.

Share with your children that the purpose of prayer includes spending time talking to God, expressing our love and thankfulness to Him. Prayer provides an opportunity to recognize God's power and authority, give Him thanks for blessings, thank Him for His involvement in the work of the Church, and thank Him for His spiritual and physical protection. In prayer we discuss with God what we are thinking, what is going on in our lives, asking Him to intercede on behalf of ourselves and others. Through prayer we seek His guidance as we strive to live His way of life.

Encourage your children to talk to God through prayer, sharing their thoughts and hearts with Him.

Spend time in prayer with your children individually and collectively. Pray with your children at the end of the day, doing so each night, if possible. In this way we teach our children about dedication to God as well as how to pray.

Ask your children to participate in prayer. Remind them that they are coming before the Eternal God. Prayer should be taken seriously. By kneeling, you are teaching your children to put themselves in subjection to God and His authority.





Encourage your children to talk to God through prayer, sharing their thoughts and hearts with Him. Subjects such as praise, thanksgiving, the coming Kingdom, their daily needs, and requests for His intervention on behalf of others can all be part of their prayers to God.

God instructs us as members of His spiritual family to be steadfast in prayer—to pray continually and “without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Teach your children to pray regularly.

Special opportunities

In addition to our regular prayer, there are many times when an event or situation inspires unplanned, immediate prayer. Teaching our children to turn to God at these times of concern, joy, or trouble helps develop and deepen their relationships with God.

These times may arise when a trial suddenly affects a friend and we want to ask God to help, or when we need immediate assistance, help or rescue. At other times we may want to (and should) give thanks and glory to God for a positive development or blessing.

Allow these special opportunities for prayer to strengthen both your and your children’s faith.

Final thoughts

Simply put, a Christian family is one being led by God’s Spirit, which is only possible if we are maintaining our relationship with God through prayer and Bible study. Our communication with God through Bible study and prayer allows our children to see our commitment to this relationship.

God should be the center of our family and a very real guide, leader and protector. He is our Rock! Through our examples and teaching, we need to direct our children to God so they can likewise have a committed relationship with Him.

Mission impossible? Not at all! “With God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26).