

Discipling Children

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This brief write-up includes the 5 predominant features that we seek to incorporate in our family's discipling and training of our children. We want them to know God, to behold Christ, to embrace the gospel, to forsake the things of this world, to live supremely for His glory – regardless of the cost!

I take each of our children out individually each week so I can instruct them in the Word of God & shepherd them toward God-glorifying conduct. So when we take each of our children out individually for 'discipleship', we incorporate the following elements.

Prayer

Every time we go out together for discipleship, I want my children to know one thing: we will pray. Indeed, we *must* pray! I want my children – many years down the road – to look back and remember one thing even if they've forgotten all else, that we prayed together every week. I teach them how to pray. Sometimes with the little ones, I'll pray a phrase and have them repeat it verbatim after me. Sometimes we'll hold hands. Oftentimes, I'll have them sit on my lap. I want them to feel the tenderness, warmth, love, and care that I have for them and the similar intimacy that believers enjoy with our heavenly Father. So we pray and thank God, we'll pray through the truth we just learned from the catechism or books of the Bible. We'll pray for each member of the family, or the church, or confess sin, or adore God's attributes.

Books of Bible

Another element that I believe is very important in training of children is an understanding of the books of the Bible – by name and in order, and to know them well. So we memorize the books of the Bible and I'll have them repeat it to me frequently. I want them to know their Bibles and where books are in the Bibles. Furthermore, we have a document that has a one-phrase, simplified summary of every book of the Bible. I want my children to all know the basic gist, the big picture, the summary of every book of the Bible – from Malachi to Matthew, from 1 Kings to 1 Corinthians, from Ruth to Romans.

Catechism

We have a church catechism which simply functions as a way of teaching biblical theology through question and answer format. The catechism is 14-pages in length and has 146 questions. I want my children to master this document. I want them to know this theological truth even as young children as their minds are so competent to memorize truth word-for-word. So we go through the document till they've memorized it well. Then, once we've finished that and they have memorized it, we go back through it a second time, a bit slower, and for each answer they give, I give them one supporting verse to memorize as a proof of that answer. This way they are learning theology, they're hiding God's Word in

their hearts, and they're downloading into the minds and hearts why we believe what we believe. This is the foundation that I work hard to lay. I want them to know God, to know Scripture, to know Christ, to know theology, and to know themselves and their desperate need for the gospel.

Theology

We have an additional document that we've compiled that works through systematic theology. We begin with bibliology, then move to theology proper, then on to Christology, anthropology, soteriology, pneumatology, angelology/demonology, Satanology, ecclesiology, Israeology, eschatology. I want my children to know biblical-theological truth. I want them to know God, to know the gospel, and to know biblical, objective, unchanging truth. I want this to be the foundation for their lives. As they grow and mature in their minds, I want to lay the foundation that will guide them in their thinking, their worldview, their actions, and their life.

Practical life issues

We have a document that we have compiled where we instruct our children in practical life issues. The document contains topics such as the urgency to examine your soul, personal holiness, service and church ministry, guidance and knowing the will of God, dealing with various aspects of daily life (the opposite sex, alcohol, drugs, etc.), and other practical topics of instruction (e.g., hygiene, gentlemanly conduct, protection of women, table-manners, church-conduct, family worship conduct, sexual purity, sports, etc.). This provides ways for me as the father to shepherd my children in the ways of God, in the Word of God, and in thinking biblically about real life issues.

* A CONCLUDING REMARK

I fully understand that I am discipling children who from the youngest of ages are desperately in need of God's regeneration. I get that. I fully acknowledge that I could instruct them in 'good conduct' and yet if I neglect the gospel I would raise Pharisees that are full of knowledge but devoid of the Spirit. I fully acknowledge that. So my goal is to reach the hearts of my children. From the youngest of ages, as they even can begin to communicate, I want to download biblical truth into their minds. I think of it like this: I want to gather the wood of instruction constantly. I want to gather, and then gather more, and then pile it on top of each other so that when the Spirit of God comes with the supernatural fire of regeneration there's much wood with which to burn. I teach and instruct my children and I fully acknowledge that all is vain unless God supernaturally, sovereignly, mercifully, graciously saves my children. And this drives me to earnest, frequent, daily, desperate prayer. O how we must pray our children into heaven. Let us pray frequently, fervently, tirelessly bring them before God and ask for His saving mercy to impart divine life to their dead souls. May God, through His sovereign grace and through the means of the proclamation of the gospel to their hearts, bring our children to saving faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.