

Kids That Love the Lord



Keeping up with the parents - Series

Ps. Waweru– 21 May 2017

Sermon Notes

How do we raise children who love the Lord?

We don't have all the answers and without a shadow of doubt God has been our help; but we can share what we have learned – 4 truths that we found really important . . .

READ Deut 6:1-9

Truth 1: Spiritual Nurture is the Parent's Responsibility

Love your God with all your heart . . . completely, without reserve. It means spiritual earnestness. The way you do this is Vs 6

- Impress them upon your hearts. – memorize them
- Impress them on your children.
- Talk about them when you sit at the dinner table
- and when you drive to school
- when you put the children to bed
- and first thing when they get up in the morning
- Tie them on your hands
- bind them on your foreheads.
- Write them on the walls
- and on your gates.

The Contemporary English Version interprets v 5-7 “ . . . love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and strength. Memorize his laws and tell them to your children over and over again. Talk about them all the time, whether you're at home or walking along the road or going to bed at night, or getting up in the morning.”

This was God's instruction to Parents – not to Sunday School teachers, not youth pastor's, not school teachers, but parents. The spiritual nurture of your children should be DELIBERATE, CONTINUOUS AND INTENTIONAL.

Sunday School only support what the parents are doing at home, it can never replace the parents, and when you get to heaven God will hold you responsible, not the Sunday School teachers. Sunday school has your children for 2 hours a week. A parent has their children for at least 5 waking hrs a week, and the whole weekend.

Presume there is no Sunday School and take responsibility for your children.

Truth 2. It takes a village to raise a child.

There is an old African saying that “It takes a village to raise up a child”. What it means is that many people in society contribute to the growth of your child.

Now in the old days people lived in villages, and parenting was such that it was the responsibility of each adult in the village to discipline all the children in the village. The net effect of that was that children were always under the watchful eye of adults who collectively socialized them into the agreed values of the community.

But not so today. We live in communities with large numbers of people living in estates, but with no responsible for each other. We don't know our neighbors and feel no obligation to them. We don't discipline their children in case you get sued – no matter how naughty they were – you just watch from a distance, but you daren't take responsibility.

Starve any relationships that were working against the values and lessons we were teaching our kids, and feed any relationships that were helping us".

Teachers can't discipline; church can't discipline; maids can't discipline . . . only worn-out, tired, absent parents can discipline. So the children get away with "blue-murder". It takes a village to raise a child. But if you're the grandparents, aunts, relatives, and friends are not around, how will your children be raised? Actually the truth is that in the vacuum of today's lifestyle, there are new village members who have moved in to take the place created by the vacuum. So who are some powerful members of your child's village are today?

1. The maids who spend tones of time with them in their formative years. Finding maids who are school dropouts. Many times we don't know where they're coming from, what their values are, what they tell the kids.
2. The school teachers who spend more waking hours with your kids than you do .
3. The TV – this villager spends a lot of time with your kids from an early age. Your children probably love this villager the most and they listen to his lessons with rapt attention. This villager teaches them
 - how to fight each other through "Tom and Jerry" shows;
 - he teaches them about evil spirits, curses and charms through Nigerian soap operas and shows like "Bewitched" that your maids watch with the 3 yr old kid while the parents are at work;
 - and he teaches them about sex and arousal through the Spanish soap operas.
4. The fourth member of the village is called " Mr. radio". He too never keeps quiet . . . he loves to talk and to sing – drumming values into the heads of kids, and he especially loves teenagers. The early morning unfiltered breakfast shows dirty talk teaching them about adultery and infidelity as we drive them to school each day with the radio on.
5. Your child's peer group and their homes.

These villagers send your children confusing, conflicting messages and values. Some members of the village are good, but others are ruining your children and undoing all your effort. But here's what is most important . . . it's not your children who form their village . . . it's you, the parent, who invites the village members into your child's life!

Starve any relationships that were working against the values and lessons we were teaching our kids, and feed any relationships that were helping us".

Truth 3. The Family Altar makes a huge difference.

During our courtship we saw Christian families we admired doing family devotions with their children – so we resolved to do them in our own home. But once we had children we found the challenge of doing family

devotions with children to be challenging. We struggled with it until a mentor advised us : *“The victory is not in doing it perfectly, the victory is in never giving up”*

We’ve not been always been consistent, we’ve struggled to be faithful, and we weren’t able to have a devotion each night, but *“The victory is not in doing it perfectly, the victory is in never giving up”*

We tried everything. We read, we sang, we play-acted, we dramatized, we watched video’s, we listened to cassettes – we had a large variety of ways. The kids loved it, and there was always a lot of laughter and fun around the family altar.

Many grown up children when asked what they loved and remember most about their growing years – say it’s the Family altar and tend to carry on the tradition into their own families making it a LASTING HERITAGE.

Even today our family dinner devotions are really joyful times. It’s a time for catching up with each other. We laugh a lot, we catch up with each other, we share jokes, we pray.

Truth 4. Children largely follow after the faith of their fathers.

Eph 6:1 – 3 *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.² Honor your father and mother— which is the first commandment with a promise—³that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.⁴Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.*

The charge is to Fathers to bring up the children in the training and instruction of the Lord. In other words . . .

- Fathers are the ones primarily responsible to train, to coach, to mentor their children. Training means you show them how, and then you practice with them, until they become good at it.
- Secondly the family altar is the responsibility of the father! Men we’ve relegated the spiritual nurture of our kids to our womenfolk, and many of us feel family devotions and praying with the children is a mother’s work . . . but it’s to us the bible speaks to.

Here’s why God talks to fathers –

- **The Swiss study** : Swiss government conducted a study on spirituality in families in 1994 and found that : *“It is the religious practice of the father of the family that determines the future attendance or absence from church of the children”*

The study reported :

1. If both father and mother attend regularly, 33 percent of their children will end up as regular churchgoers.
2. If the father is irregular and mother regular, only 3 percent of the children will subsequently become regulars themselves.

Children tend to take their cues about domestic life from Mom while their conceptions of the God come from Dad. If Dad takes faith in God seriously then the message to their children is that God should be taken seriously.

The bottom line? A bad father-child relationship can produce long-lasting spiritual damage in the life of the child. Fathers have huge power – to influence the faith of their children, or to damage their children spiritually.

CONCLUSION

1. God will hold you accountable for your children's faith, so be active in training them. Don't depend on the Sunday School alone. Take charge.
2. Fathers – set up a family altar and lead that family time. Be active in church, and in demonstrating your faith.
3. Intentionally construct your child's village; don't leave it to the TV and friends. Be intentional.
4. *Feed the relationships that nurture your children's faith, and starve the ones that work against their faith.*