

How Can I Be A Godly Parent?

Introduction. The problem of the Israelites is found in Judges 2:12 and 2 Kings 17:15. They loved “the people that were round about them.” When God’s people made no distinction between themselves and the heathen, God punished them.

We could say a lot about these passages, but we want to concentrate on the homes in which children were raised during these times. Because of the results, it is pretty clear that the children would have an upbringing similar to if not just like the heathen “round about them.”

With this in mind, look in Luke 6:32-35. Note what Jesus uses as a point of comparison: “For sinners also do even the same.” His point is that God’s people are to be different, to live by a higher standard than those “round about them.”

Now contrast this with Joshua 24:14-15 where Joshua was determined to be different from the ungodly examples set by some of the patriarchs. God’s people are to be different from the world, and they are to train their children to be different from the world. Because of this responsibility, how can we avoid the dangers we and our children face?

I. ***By Reading The Bible***

- A. Skepticism is rampant in our society and there is no sign of it changing for the better.
 1. It has invaded every discipline relating to belief in God: history, biology, geology, astronomy, archaeology, etc.
 2. Your children will meet other children who are skeptics. As they grow up, the skeptics they encounter will become more educated. It will be extremely discouraging to them to see skeptics disparage the evidence of the scriptures.
 3. What is the difference between the skeptic who does not believe the Bible and the negligent Christian parent who never reads it?
 - a) Timothy’s mother Eunice and grandmother Lois made the difference in his life (2 Timothy 1:5).
 - b) Timothy knew the scriptures, and therefore was able to obey the scriptures (2 Timothy 3:15; cf. Acts 16:1-2).
- B. Think of all the books that are read in the world. Within moments we can know everything about the latest best-seller.
 1. Do our children see us give as much attention to the Bible as we do to other books? Do we read it regularly ourselves? Do we read it to our children? Parents read other books to their children when their children are young, and that is great. But we need to make sure our children hear us read the Bible to them too.

2. In many homes there is either no Bible in the house, or the Bible is merely a "decoration." Pick it up and instill it in your child (Psalm 19:7-11; 78:1-8; 119:11).

II. ***By Praying Fervently***

- A. It is interesting today how, from time to time, the religious world holds a "day of prayer" or a "prayer service."
 1. Someone may object and say that God does not hear their prayers (Proverbs 28:9; Jeremiah 14:11-12; 1 Peter 3:12).
 2. Does he hear ours? Are we praying (Luke 18:1; 1 John 5:14)? A lot of false religions around us are praying! When the storm came upon them, the heathen found Jonah sleeping when they were all praying (Jonah 1:4-5)!
- B. It is crucial for your children to see you praying.
 1. You approaching the "throne of grace" at meals, bed time, and during troubled times provides great spiritual training (1 Thessalonians 5:17; Hebrews 4:16). Pray to God that you will all get to heaven together.
 2. I am sure that the faith within Timothy's mother caused her to pray to God. Timothy no doubt saw her, heard her, and she no doubt prayed with him.
 3. What is the difference between the unbelieving parent who would not think of praying and the Christian parent who never prays with his/her children?

III. ***By Using Your Money Wisely***

- A. What is the difference between the unbeliever who would not dream of financially supporting the church and the Christian who will not financially support the Lord's church (1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7)?
- B. Studies have shown that people with a religious background give significantly more to charitable causes than atheists and agnostics. There is a big difference between the good works done by atheists and those done by a Christian (Mark 9:41).
 1. We do not have to debate as to whether we are richly blessed: we are.
 2. Will our children see us using our prosperity to glorify God (Galatians 6:9-10; 1 Timothy 6:17-18)?

IV. ***By Having A Good Relationship With Brethren***

- A. Strong affection should exist between brethren (Romans 12:10).
 1. Think of the number of unbelievers our children will meet in their lives who will disparage Christians. What is the difference between

- the unbeliever who does nothing to build up the Lord's church and the Christian who continually finds fault with his or her brethren and does nothing to build up the church?
- a) When you are negative, critical, and harsh against your brethren, you are poisoning your children.
 - b) Sadly, sometimes children, in order to be faithful, when they come of age, have to cut out the cancer and get rid of the disease. Do not be the disease your children have to get rid of!
 - c) Make sure you stop and think of the fact that the brother or sister you are running down in front of your children might be the one that converts them or brings them back to God when they get older.
2. Unbelievers often do not like or even hate Christians. Christians sometimes show the same behavior toward people who they ought to fervently love (1 Peter 1:22).
- B. Parents can really make a difference in helping their children develop right attitudes towards God's people, even when they demonstrate their imperfections. This positive attitude toward brethren will carry over into a positive attitude toward the church.

V. ***By Setting A Good Example***

- A. Society is full of self-indulgent, greedy, dishonest, immoral, irreligious parents who are wringing their hands and wondering aloud, "What is the matter with our kids?" How can parents not understand (Ezekiel 16:44)?
1. Parents who find pleasure in television and movies that show immorality and profane language should not be surprised when they hear their children tell filthy jokes, become pregnant, or father a child in their teen years.
 2. How can fathers and mothers use the Lord's name in vain, gossip, and get angry at family members, and then expect something different from their children?
- B. Example is important in leadership roles.
1. How much is the "nurture and admonition (training and instruction) of the Lord" worth if parents will not live it in their lives (Ephesians 6:4)?
 2. What should a parent exemplify? Paul gave a great list of what parents can show their children (1 Timothy 4:12).
- C. Another great example to set is devotion to the Lord.
1. The lost around us will make a big effort to get to important events, whether it be standing in line early for tickets to a new movie or going several hours early to see a concert or a sporting event.

2. Not only does your demeanor around brethren matter, but how you treat the activities of the church matter too. The most important event for the Christian is worshipping God at a local church (Psalm 122:1).
 - a) What does our level of participation say about our desire to help the church?
 - b) What does our arrival time at services say about its importance to us?
3. Parents have to ask themselves what is the practical difference between a man of the world and a Christian in the church who lives like a man in the world?

Conclusion. These are tough issues for Christians. The fact is, Christians make no difference until they are different. It is not enough to be content with good morality -- we have to excel in all points of being a Christian.

Joshua's made a courageous decision with glorious results (Joshua 24:14-15; Judges 2:6-7). What will the church be like in the next generation? Will your children go to heaven when they die? You might just make the difference for them.