



THRIVE Devotional

Week 11 – Lesson 1

Teach Your Children to Love God

Scripture reading Deuteronomy 6:1-7

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children”

As parents, our primary responsibility is to teach our children to love the Lord our God. We will discuss over the next week in these devotional pages how to teach our children to love God. Today, we will examine the first principle: praying for your children.

Pray for your children every single day. Years ago, I was at a men’s conference in which the preacher spoke about pastor friends whose children strayed away from God. I remember thinking what a tragic thing that would be. I wanted my children to grow up and live for the Lord. At that time, I only had two young boys. I can remember getting down on my knees before God and praying for my children. I told the Lord that more than anything in life I wanted my children to serve God. I made a commitment to do whatever was necessary to bring them up for the glory of God.

Those that know me, know that I am not an eloquent speaker, and quite frankly, I found it difficult at times to have family devotions. One thing I determined to do was to make sure my children heard me pray for them every day. I determined I would pray for my children every day. God answers prayer.

It is essential that we pray for our children, but what should we pray? The following is a sample of what I pray each day: *Dear Lord Jesus, please protect and provide for my family. I pray that my children will be healthy and whole, physically, spiritually, and mentally, and that they would stay pure and be used by You.* I also prayed that God would give our children godly spouses. I pray for my adult children that God will bless, prosper, and protect them. If they have any specific prayer requests, I pray for those specific requests. Don’t let the busyness of life squeeze out your time of prayer for your children. Prayer changes things. If you pray for your children, they will THRIVE.



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Week 11 – Lesson 2

Play with Your Children

Scripture reading Matthew 19:13-15

“But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

Years ago while driving through North Dakota on a family vacation, I was listening to the preaching of Dr. Howard Hendricks. He related this story: “I was in a home of a pastor recently. One of his children came up and asked if I could play with him. I told the little boy I would be happy to play with him. The little boy responded with one of the saddest statements I have ever heard, ‘Thank you, Dr. Hendricks, for playing with me. You see, my daddy is a pastor, and he is too busy playing with other people’s kids to have time to play with me.’” When I heard that story, it broke my heart. It is easy to get so busy in life that we neglect time with our children. When was the last time you had fun with your children?

As a young father, I determined that I was going to schedule fun for our family. I sat down and wrote down every fun, inexpensive thing I could do in the Las Vegas Valley. I determined to do as many fun things with my children as I could afford. Let me list for you some of things that we did together:

1. Watch Disney movies and pop popcorn Sunday night after church
2. Go hiking
3. Go to the park
4. Take a picnic lunch to rural towns in Nevada and stop for ice cream and French fries
5. Go camping. These were great memories
6. Camp out in the backyard, move the television out and watch movies in the moonlight

These were great memories.

Your children need to know that being a Christian and living a Christian life is the most exciting, fun filled life anyone could have. After all, we have the God of the universe living inside of us. Play with them. Enjoy their Legos. Enjoy their video games. Enjoy the time together. If you play with you children, your children will want to be with you. Play with your children, and your family will THRIVE.

*For a list of 69 fun activities contact me at info@experincelbiety.com.



THRIVE Devotional

Week 11 – Lesson 3

Provide, Discipline, and Instruct

Scripture reading Ephesians 6:1-4

“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

God’s Word is very clear. It is the responsibility of fathers, with the aid of mothers to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The word *nurture* here carries the idea of discipline. The word *admonition* carries the thought of instruction. It is our responsibility as parents to make sure that our children have proper discipline and instruction.

What exactly does that mean? It simply means bringing a child to a point of understanding that there are consequences for disobedience or any type of inappropriate behavior. Discipline is not just a matter of corporal punishment or proper spanking. It is doing what is necessary to set your child on the proper course. This takes time, love, and great effort.

Not only are we supposed to properly discipline our children, but we are to instruct them. A child is born like a blank slate. He needs to grow as Jesus grew, into proper adulthood. The Bible says the Lord Jesus grew in four areas. *“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”*

Jesus grew in:

1. Wisdom = Mentally
2. Stature = Physically
3. In favor with God = Spiritually
4. In favor with man = Socially

Our responsibility as parents is to see that our children are instructed in these areas and disciplined in such a fashion that they grow in these areas.

Christian education and continual involvement in your local church will help you bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Your commitment to these two Christ-centered institutions are essential and can be a tremendous help as you attempt to raise your children to honor Jesus. If you properly discipline your children and give them instruction, your children will THRIVE.



THRIVE Devotional

Week 11 – Lesson 4

Your Children, God’s Gift

Scripture reading Psalm 127:1-5

“Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.”

I love our Scripture reading for today. There are so many things we can learn from this.

1. We learn of our inability to build a godly family. *“Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.”* It is so important that you, as a parent spend time with God and ask God to build the house. You must rely upon Him and what His Word teaches you. We are reminded in Psalm 127:2 that we can rise up early; stay up late; eat the bread of sorrows; or we can rely on Him and let Him give the beloved sleep.
2. When raising children, there will be stress in your home at times. That is when you must remember that it is God that is building the house. It is God that has given you the children He has given you. If you rely on Him and His Word, God will help you bring up those children. Your children will go through hard times and they will make mistakes. If you are relying on God, He will help you even in the most difficult times.

We are reminded in verse three that children are a gift from God. Certainly there will be times you will like to return the gift and get a refund, but if you stick with it, your children will be your greatest blessing. Children are like arrows in the hand of a mighty man. Bringing up your children and watching them go out in the world and do a work for God will bring you contentment and joy even in your old age.

Verse five ends by telling us that a man who has many children serving God is happy. There is no greater gift than children that God can give you while living on planet Earth.

Trust God to help you raise your children. Remember they are His children not yours. Remember they are the heritage that God has given you: therefore, thank God for them daily. Prepare them to go out into this world to represent Christ. As you do, your family will THRIVE.



THRIVE Devotional

Week 11 – Lesson 5

Train and Protect Your Child

Scripture reading Proverbs 22:1-6

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

Our Scripture reading today is filled with many godly admonitions and they end with verse six. It is as though God is telling us to teach our children these principles so that while they are growing older, they will not depart from them.

1. We need to teach our children that a good name is better than great riches. In our world, people are willing to sacrifice anything to make wealth. It is better to teach our children that they are on this planet to represent Jesus Christ not to get rich. When they do, God will allow them to become a person of influence.
2. In verse two, we are taught that there is no rich and poor before the Lord. He judges us according to our character and it is the Lord’s opinion that matters the most. It is so important that we teach our children that what God thinks is more important than what man thinks.
3. In verse three, we are taught a prudent man or a man with understanding makes decisions about life based on future outcome. A wise man evaluates a situation before he enters into it. This will allow him to avoid the consequences of sinful behavior.
4. In verse four, we are taught to be humble, to fear God, and depend upon Him.
5. Again in verse five, we are told that there are grave consequences for a sinful lifestyle, but a man who knows how to discipline his soul will have great reward.

This passage is filled with instruction and warning. We are told to make sure we train our children which means we are to protect them from evil and teach them right. Don’t let anybody ever convince you that you are an overprotective or “helicopter parent.” God wants us to train and protect our children. When we do, they will be happy with their lives, and you will be content. Proverbs 21:15 says, *“The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.”* Train and protect your children, and your family will THRIVE.



THRIVE Devotional

Week 11 – Lesson 6

Practice Positive Replacement

Scripture reading Proverbs 1:10-19

Proverbs 13:20, *“He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.”*

In our Scripture reading today, Solomon warns his son, who would be the next king of Israel, to stay away from wicked people. He warns that all of their plotting would bring them to naught. The consequences of their wicked lifestyle would destroy not only them but also those they were around. It is important that we teach our children what is right and wrong. It is important that we teach them to stay away from those that choose to do wrong. At the same time, it is very important that we teach them to choose which is right. Proverbs 13:20 says, *“He that walketh with wise men shall be wise.”*

Years ago, when raising my children, I determined to not take away something negative without trying to find a positive to replace it. The entertainment industry in our culture is quite wicked and perverse. We ought to protect our children from its negative influences. However, we need to replace it with good things. I am so thankful today that many Christian producers are making good and pure movies that we can enjoy with our families. I like to laugh, but many comedians are quite frankly filthy. God has however, raised up some good Christian comedians who we can enjoy.

My admonition to you is very simple. If you are going to take something negative away, always replace it with something positive. My children didn't mind missing the wrong type of music because in our home we had good, godly music. They didn't regret not going to a friend's house, because we always brought friends around. Friends who shared our Christian values and enjoyed the same type of wholesome entertainment.

Often times, our positive replacement was going to church was because our friends and families were centered around the local church. Don't focus on the negative; focus on the positive. Replace that which is hurtful for the family with that which is helpful. Practice the principle of positive replacement. You can have a family that THRIVES.