**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

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**Some Things Parents Can Do (Part 1)**

We live in a wicked world, a world around us that is becoming more and more wicked. You have to feel for children who are growing up in this wicked world. There was a man who announced to a brother that he was about to become a grandfather, and the brother congratulated him. He then said “Really I don’t know if congratulations are in order or not when I think of the world in which my grandchild is going to be born.” We can understand his concern, but there are some things that parents can do to help their children be Christians even in the midst of a wicked world. Noah was able to influence his children for good in the midst of a very wicked world. So can we.

Today and next week I want to talk about some things parents can do to raise their children to be Christians in a very wicked world.

First of all, you can teach them the word of God. God required this of the children of Israel. He said to them in Deut. 6:6-9, *“And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”* If God required this of the children of Israel to keep them faithful, surely it is required of us today. Paul said in Ephesians 6:4, *“And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”* To bring children up in the training and admonition of the Lord includes teaching them the word of the Lord. Some people have the idea that we should not try to influence our children in religious matters. Their view is that we should just let them grow up without religious teaching and let them make their own decisions when it comes to religion. This idea flies in the face of the passages we have just read that specifically teach parents to teach, train their children. Prov. 22:6 says, *“Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.”* Paul said to Timothy, *“and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”* (2 Tim. 3:15). How did Timothy know the Holy Scriptures from childhood? It was because someone taught him. In 2 Tim. 1:5 Paul said to him, *“when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.”* No doubt, it was his mother and grandmother who taught him. Can you picture Timothy’s mother Eunice teaching him about those great heroes of faith such as Abraham, Joseph, and Daniel, teaching him the Law and how God worked in the lives of their fathers? There is no surprise then when Paul came to Lystra he found Timothy *“well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium.”* (Acts 16:1-2).

If your children are to grow up in this wicked world to be Christians, faithful servants of God, you need to teach them the word of God. That does not just mean to take them to church services, but to teach them daily, when you rise up in the morning, when you are driving along in the car, and when you lie down at night, tell them about God and His will for their lives. This is something you can do.

Secondly, you can teach them a love for God. As we teach them the Bible, the word of God, we must teach them with a goal. You can teach your children facts revealed in the Bible, you can get them to quote large portions of the Bible, and then they not love God. Our teaching must have a goal and that is for them to love God and out of that love obey Him. How do we do that? First, we must teach them what God has done as history, and not as fairytales. The stories that we read about in the Bible concerning God’s love and mercy, and concerning His judgment on evil doers, must be taught as actual events, because that is what they are. These are not “once upon a time in a faraway land” kind of stories. The Bible is history. I want my children to know that. God is real. His love is real. I want to show them the evidence for God and His revelation, the Bible. I want them to see His love and be thankful for it. I want them to know of God’s judgment on those who persist in evil. When they see God’s love and God’s judgment as being real, they then will be motivated to love Him, respect Him, and obey Him. This is the secret if they are to remain strong in their faith in the midst of a wicked world. Their faith will be tested, but they are not likely to leave their faith when their faith is rooted in a true love, respect, and an appreciation for God.

And also, if we are to teach our children to love God, they must be able to see it in our own lives. We cannot expect them to love God if we do not love Him ourselves. This is something we as parents can do. We can love God and show our children what it means to love God.

Then thirdly, you can teach them to prepare for the realities of life. Life is full of bumps, and bruises, and hurts, and disappointments. Some bumps, bruises, and hurts are more severe than others. The best preparation that children can have for the more severe hurts that will come in life, is for us to help them through what we might see as the little hurts that they will face as they are growing up. We must allow our children to experience bumps and bruises. We must let them bear the consequences of their choices. When we allow our children to always have their way, when we give them whatever they want, when we try to shield them from every disappointment or hurt, we are doing our children a great disservice. What we are doing is spoiling them. And a spoiled child rarely does well in life. He doesn’t know how to handle the bumps and bruises that will come his way. We have not prepared them for the realities of life.

Paul said to Christians in Romans 5:3-4, *“And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.”* Notice, tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character. This is true of Christians as they live their lives, but this can also be true of children growing up. We don’t like to see our children hurt, but sometimes the hurts and tears that our children experience helps them to develop the kind of character we want them to have. Their hurts help them to prepare for the time when they will face some of the most severe hurts in life. Allowing them to go through hurts and disappointments will help them learn how to deal with hurts and disappointments. When my daughter entered the first grade I took her for the first day of school. She was scared and did not want to be left alone there. She wanted to go back home with me. We assured her that everything would be alright. She was safe. She was crying and had a tight grip around my arm and would not let go. I literally had to pry her fingers from my arm and walk away while the teacher held her. For a parent, that was hard to do. But if I had given in to her wishes it would have made it harder on her later. Let your children go through the little bumps and bruises and disappointments. It prepares them for the realities of life.

Fourthly, you can communicate to them that serving God is their number one priority. We who are Christians know this is what God expects of His children. God and His kingdom should be our top priority in life. Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, *“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”* Jesus said in Matthew 10:37-39, *“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.”* Jesus should come first in our lives. I need to teach that to my children. But sometimes our responsibility to serve the Lord, such as attending church services, comes in conflict with the child’s schoolwork, or the child wanting to go to a friend’s party, or a baseball game in which the child is wanting to play. The thinking of some parents is “we don’t want to disappoint the child,” or “we don’t want to make him angry,” and so they give way to the child. No! When you allow the child to put secular things before spiritual things you are teaching the child that the secular things are more important than the spiritual, the very opposite of what you are wanting to teach them. Teach them what is right. You put first things first and expect the child to do the same. Some parents think “if we force church services on our children they will rebel later.” Let me ask you, if the child does not want to do his homework, do you give way to him because he may rebel against homework when he gets older? If the child does not want to take a bath, do you let him have his way because he may rebel against taking baths when he gets older? If the child does not want to brush his teeth, do you give way to him because he may refuse to brush his teeth when he is an adult? No! You teach him what is right, what is good hygiene, and expect him to do it.

The decisions you make when conflicts arise between secular activities and the Lord’s service will teach the child what comes first in life. If you place schoolwork, or social activities, or a ball game before the service to the Lord you are teaching the child that those things come before the Lord. Your child may become the valedictorian of his class, or the star quarterback on the football team, and he may make you proud, but none of that will be a consolation if he hears the words when he stands before Christ in judgment, *“Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”* I want my children to go to heaven. But to go to heaven they must learn that Jesus comes first. If they are to lean it, I must teach it to them.

I want to continue this study next week -- some things parents can do to raise their children to be Christians in the midst of a wicked world. We hope you will join us then.

Our time is gone for today. We thank you for listening.

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