

How can I be a spiritual leader in my family?

By Dave Long, Vice President of Operations

Americans love leaders. Leaders have larger-than-life personalities that endear followers. Leaders have charisma and good looks. Leaders have all the answers. Leaders tell everyone what to do. Leaders run businesses and make lots of money that they spend on fancy cars and exotic vacations. Leaders write best-selling books and become famous, and then become even more famous after Oprah reads their books. Leaders have it made, right?

Not really. Leadership is hard, and anyone who has truly led knows it's simply not that glamorous. Being a leader takes perseverance, failure, guts, energy, time, sacrifice, humility and plenty more, none of which make for an effective tagline below your picture on the cover of People Magazine. So if you're not interested in being a leader, you may stop reading right now. But if you truly want to lead, in this case your family, you're willing to dive into day to day life, and navigate your family through life's pitfalls.

Quite simply, leadership is modeling what you expect of others. If you're a father who values hard work, you're willing to mow the yard, clean up after dinner, and maintain employment. If you're a mother who values communication, you're willing to listen, engage in conversation, and share information in a mature manner. And if parents act to the contrary, expect contrary results from your children. It's not complicated to understand; it is difficult to implement. Behavior is caught more than taught. As parents act, their adult behavior is literally sticking to their children, like flies to flypaper. Parents are splatting their kids with behavioral examples all day long. Splatting kids with love results in a loving household. Splatting kids with criticism results in misery for all. Are you modeling the behavior you expect in your child? If you are, you're a leader. If you're "leading", but no one's following, you're only just taking a walk.

How can I be a spiritual leader in my family? (Part II)

By Scott Taylor, Caribbean Mountain Academy Director

By God's design, spiritual leadership falls first upon the back of the husband and father. However, if the husband is absent, this responsibility falls upon the mother.

Spiritual leadership is actually not technical at all. It's quite simple actually. You model Christ in your home. This includes initiating prayer with your family, being involved in your local church, reading your bible and sharing and living out its truth (which is worship).

The bible speaks to the importance of bible discussion in your life and the lives of your loved ones stating: *"¹⁸ Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ¹⁹ Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ²⁰ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.... (Deuteronomy 11:18-20)."* Then again it states: *"⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.^[a] ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children.... (Deuteronomy 6:4-7a)."* God's intention is that we would fall in love with Him as He is in love with us. And, the only love He accepts is through his Son Jesus, whom He desires for us to be best friends with: *"¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him (John 3:16-17)."* Then Jesus states in John 15:12-15: *"¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you."*

A Pastor in your local church can also be of great benefit to your family through counsel and bible teaching. Also, getting your child involved in a children's program or a youth program will allow them to hear weekly messages that speak directly to issues they face daily. Then, parents are able to discuss these messages at home which, in turn, opens up communication between child and parent. Your world view, your perspective should always be through a biblical lens. Your conversations should always include thanks to God. The problems you work together to solve should include prayer. Your decisions should always be considered in light of scripture. God wants to direct you in all the crossroads of life. But in order for this to occur, you must seek Him daily, *"⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight (Proverbs 3:5-6)."*

So, place God and His word in the center of your life, and in the life of your family. This doesn't mean that life will always be rosy, but it does mean that you can have peace, direction, and the assurance of God's presence in all you do. His perspective is eternal, and His heart is to lead you and your family through even the darkest of times.

Other Resources:

- *Wild at Heart* by John Eldredge
- *The Making of a Man of God* by Alan Redpath
- *Lead Your Family Like Jesus* by Ken Blanchard, Phil Hodges and Tricia Goyer
- *Rocking the Roles* by Robert Lewis
- *Point Man – How a Man Can Lead His Family* by Steve Farrar
- *Tender Warrior, Every Man's Purpose, Every Woman's Dream, Every Child's Hope* by Stu Weber
- *Anchor Man – How a Father Can Anchor His Family in Christ for the Next 100 Years* by Steve Farrar
- *Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren
- *Soul Provider: Spiritual Steps to Limitless Love* by Edward L. Beck