



Part 3 – Family Devotions... Creating a Spiritual Climate in Your Home!

Psalm 119 and Joshua 1:8

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Illustration:

Some of us have constant “winter climate” in our homes spiritually. When we’ve attempted family devotions, we got a “cold response” from our kids, and haven’t ventured out to try it again. We are hoping for a better or “warmer” response. The problem is spring never comes spiritually, because we are waiting for some optimal situation that will never happen. In essence we’ve given up and never gave it a chance! Sad story, but so true of so many families spiritually!

Did you know according to George Barna, *Revolutionary Parenting* that among church kids only ...

29% have been on a family service project. (You can change that statistic by bringing your kids to serve day June 5th!)

- 28% have talked to Mom about faith. (12% Search Institute)
- 13% have talked to Dad about faith. (5% Search Institute)
- 27% have had family devotions, prayer or Bible reading in their family. (9% Search Institute)

Family Devotions! The very thought produces a quivering, “knot in your stomach” kind of doubt for parents; and for the kids a “not this again” kind of despair! Are they really that bad? Why is that most parents have no kind of real interaction with their kids about spiritual things on a regular basis? What keeps us from having a family time each week? What changes do we need to make to change the spiritual climate in our homes!

I. The Obstacles: What keeps us from doing family devotions? If you are empty nesters, the same question applies to you as a couple praying together, etc.

A. We don't have time.

1. Or: I don't have time to prepare! Really? Or you don't want to make the time?
2. Time is an excuse. We make the time for the things that are truly important. What in your schedule needs to change?
3. We all have the same amount of time (168 hours)... how are you choosing to spend yours?
4. **Jar illustration:** Rice (all the other stuff in life!) and rocks (the important things); Make time for the most important things every day... QT, prayer, exercise, etc.

B. I don't know what to do. Where do I start?

1. Pick a night. Start once a week.
2. Grab a resource:
 - Tim Smith, *52 Family Time Ideas*, Bethany House, 2006.
 - www.famtime.org
 - *Take it Home and Faith Begins at Home* by Mark Holmen
3. Don't get discouraged... if you miss a week, start over.
4. Use the older kids to help you.
5. Use Question of the Night to get started.
6. Pray every night when you put them to bed.

C. They get "the Bible" at their Christian school (or youth group)!

1. As we discussed the last 2 weeks... the parents not the church are the primary faith developer of kids. Deut. 6:4
2. Studying the Bible for a test for school is very different from discussing the Bible with your family. One

emphasizes knowledge acquisition the other emphasizes application. Our student ministry is only supplementing what is being done in the home. **Illus.: We are a meal supplement not a meal substitute.**

3. Research: Parents are still the best at transmitting spiritual values.

D. What if I don't have all the answers? I am not a Bible scholar.

1. You don't need to be. If you get "stumped" it gives you an opportunity to do a little research together.
2. As a last resort, you can call me! 😊

E. My kids think it is boring.

1. So change it up!
2. Involve the kids. Let them act it out. (Example: Dad... you can be Balaam's donkey).
3. Keep it short.
4. Use object lessons. **Example: 1000 illustration. PP slide**
 - We assume that we know the answers... jump to conclusions, etc.
 - *James 1:19, "Be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger..."*

II. The Outcomes: Why is a regular family time in the Word so important?

A. The Benefits: (Psalm 119)

1. **It keeps us from offending God!**
 - *v. 11 "that I might not sin against thee"*
 - Sin offends God whether it is willful or not! All of us sin (Rom. 3:23) but God's Word gives us the wisdom to avoid it

- "He that falls into sin is a man; that grieves at it, is a saint; that boasts of it, is a devil." Thomas Fuller
2. **It gives us the proper perspective of God!**
 - *v. 38 "establish the word to thy servant, as produces reverence for Thee"*
 - Reverence and honor for God is developed as you get to know Him... especially in the Psalms. A proper view of God is what ultimately gives your life significance.
 - "I cannot imagine how the clockwork of the universe can exist without a clockmaker." Voltaire
 3. **It gives us life changing hope!**
 - *v. 49-50 "...in which thou hast made me hope... comfort in my affliction... thy word has revived me!"*
 - The Bible talks about that our Hope should be in God (Ps. 71:5, 131:3; Jer. 14:22; Lam. 3:21)
 - The word *hope* in the Heb. has the idea of eagerly waiting. Used 140 times in the Bible.
 4. **It makes us wise!**
 - *"it makes me wiser than my enemies" (v. 98)*
 - You may not be smarter than everyone, but at least you won't make mistakes that "lost" people make apart from God. (Ex. Premarital sex, fidelity to marriage, basic honesty, etc.) Earthly wisdom may appear to be enticing, but falls short compared to godly wisdom.
 - You want to be wise? *Fearing/Reverence for God is the beginning or first step! (Psalm 11:10)*
 - Ask God for wisdom in your decision-making (James 1:5)

5. **It gives us direction in life!**

- *“Thy word is lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path” (v.105)*
- Light and lamps are always symbolic of God’s will and direction for our lives.
- We often pray for direction, but try reading God’s Word and look how He directs your path.

B. The Blessing:

Read from PP slide together as a congregation:

“This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.” (Joshua 1:8)

1. The Principle: **Internalizing God’s Word will allow you to experience God’s blessing in your life!**

2. The Prerequisites: There are 2 conditions...

- **Meditation:** It means to linger over; to thoughtfully consider. We must do our part by meditating on God’s Word. In other words memorize so that it permeates your mind (not the eastern concept of emptying your mind). It is **verbalizing** God’s Word so that it becomes ingrained in your lifestyle. Note the emphasis is on the **mouth vs. the mind!**
- **Obedience:** We must apply it! Live it! Do it! Obedience is seen as the test of our fidelity/love for God. (I John 2:3-6; 5:2)

3. The Promises... 2 promises!

- **You will be prosperous.**
“Whatever [the righteous] does prospers” (Ps 1:3)

- **You will have success.**
“Commit your works to the LORD, and your plans will succeed” (Prov. 16:3)
- Note: These 2 words are generally not associated with financial success, but rather the success that comes when one’s life is in order and properly focused on God. Clearly righteous people can have a financial upheaval as seen in Job’s life. This isn’t a promise of financial success or a prosperity gospel. By meditating and studying God’s Word your decisions will be influenced by God’s priorities not earthly priorities. That is why *Matt. 6:33 says to focus on the kingdom of God and then “all these things shall be added unto you!”*
- **Illus.:** Doing QT before doing homework in High School.

III. The Opportunity: How do we get started?

A. **Commitment:** Start this week!

1. Make a promise to yourself, your kids and God to spend at least 1 night a week doing family devotions. Call it Family Time. Pick a night and stick with it, if you have to move it around because of work then move it, but do it!
2. Quit making excuses. Be honest about your true priorities.

B. **Concentration:** Look for teachable moments!

1. Spiritual conversations can happen anywhere.
2. Use the car, the grocery store, the TV, etc.
3. Use bed time to talk and read.
 - Resource: *A View from the Zoo* by Gary Richmond. **(Promote him coming June 13th).**
 - Make up your own spiritual adventures

C. **Consistency**: Create a routine!

1. Commit to doing this for the next 6 weeks! Let it become a habit.
2. **Illustration**: 21 days produces a habit. Ex. Flossing
3. Realize what is at stake!

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