

KEEP THE FAITH

I. **Seek the kingdom first.**

- A. I believe children are born with a hypocrisy sniffer.
 - 1. You can't get much past them.
 - 2. If you ask them or tell them to do something and you don't do it yourself, they point it out quickly.
- B. If we teach them to serve God and we aren't doing it ourselves, they are going to see that.
 - 1. If we teach them they need to read their Bibles, but we don't read ours, they see it.
 - 2. If we teach them to not say certain words but we let them fly from time to time, they hear and see it.
 - 3. If we teach them that church is important but we don't attend like we should, they see it.
- C. They may have better sense than to call us on it and point it out to us, but they are storing it away for future use.
- D. There needs to be no doubt in the minds of our children about our having God first in our lives.
 - 1. They need to see us dwell on pure things (Philippians 4:8).
 - 2. They need to see us at worship even if there is a conflicting event.
 - 3. They need to see us pray and read God's word.
- E. These things aren't part time efforts, but a full time way of life.
- F. Paul's words in Philippians 3:14 should be seen in our lives.
- G. Our children need to see us seeking the kingdom above all else (Matthew 6:33).

II. **Sow the seed in their lives.**

- A. How often do we refer to scripture with our children?
 - 1. Our children ask question of a moral or spiritual nature on occasion.
 - 2. Do we give them our opinion or tell them what the Bible says about the topic?
- B. We can't leave the moral and spiritual training of our children to their Bible class teachers.
 - 1. This is no knock on our Bible teachers, who I am sure do the best they can to instill a knowledge of God's word in our children's lives.
 - 2. Neither am I knocking the need of a good Bible school.
 - 3. What I am saying is that Bible school should be a supplement to what is being taught at home.
- C. In my house, this is something I know I need to do better.
 - 1. Time is short with so many activities going on.
 - 2. That is no excuse to not take time to talk, study and pray with our children.
 - 3. Everybody is busy, but we better not be too busy for Bible study or we will lose our children.
- D. It is up to parents to instill a knowledge of God and His word in their children.

1. We need to teach them right from wrong according to God's word and not man's moral standard.
 2. We need to teach them truth from error according to God's word and not man's moral standard.
- E. Our children are on loan to us from God and we are going to have to answer for our stewardship of them.

III. Spend time with our children.

- A. I know our recliners or couches are more comfortable than being down on the floor or outside running around with our children.
1. However, we create memories for them by being with them and doing things with them.
 2. They will look back on the things we did or did not do with them and use those things as models for their parenting.
- B. When we spend time with our children, we are letting them know we love them in a far greater way than telling them we love them.
1. Don't get me wrong, they need to hear us tell them we love them.
 2. However, actions most definitely speak louder than words.
- C. Not only are we letting them know we love them by spending time with them, we help them better understand God's love for them by doing this.
1. Notice what Jesus said about parents (Matthew 7:9-11).
 2. We sin from time to time and still treat our children well.
 3. But, if we can do that, think how much greater God is than us because He is perfect.
- D. It is hard to grasp the love of a parent for a child until you have a child of your own.
1. That type of love is deep and amazing, but think of how overwhelming the love of God is for us.
 2. When our children come to realize how much God loves them, it will be much harder to leave the church.
- E. Our actions and time spent with them go a long way to letting them know God's love for them.

IV. Speak highly of the church.

- A. There is no greater institution on the face of the earth.
- B. The church is made up of people (1 Corinthians 12:12-14).
1. People do dumb things.
 2. It would be easy to spend a lot of time in front of our children pointing out those dumb things.
 3. I know I have been guilty of that.
- C. The Lord died for the church and purchased it with His blood (Acts 20:28).
- D. The church is His bride (Ephesians 5:25-27) and we would never want to be critical of someone's wife.
- E. We need to make sure that we do our best to keep a positive image of the Lord's church in the minds of our children.
1. Berating her members doesn't do that.
 2. Being critical of the elders doesn't do that.
 3. Talking negatively about the preacher doesn't do that.

- F. No doubt members will falter and do dumb things and so will elders and so will the preacher.
 - 1. We don't, I don't, need to talk about those things in front of our children.
 - 2. We need to do all we can to help our children develop a love for the Lord and His church.
- G. The church on the human side is not perfect but it is on the divine side and our children need to have that image in their minds, not constantly being shown the church's imperfections.

Idea from an article by Ben Giselbach in THINK magazine.