

10. Helping Our Children Develop a Foundation on the Word of God

In our last topic, we discussed helping our children learn to work with the Holy Spirit by showing them how to develop the example of a godly father. Today, we will look at another key topic as we show our physical and spiritual children how to help others develop their foundation for ministry on the Word of God. Most new Christians have a foundation that is based on worldly values. That is why it is important to have someone walk alongside them and show them how to develop their foundation on the Word of God so that they learn to think Biblically instead of continuing to think from a worldly point of view.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:13, we read, “For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.” Paul and the team with him helped the new Christians at Thessalonica begin to understand that they were being taught the Word of God. As they learned to become obedient to the Word of God, they saw that the Word of God would work in them effectively to change and transform their lives. This is the ministry that we want to help our children develop as they work with new Christians.

In Isaiah 55:8-9, we read, “‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,’ says the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.’” In these verses, we see that the thoughts and ways of God are much higher than our thoughts and ways. In fact, there is such a difference that the Lord compares that difference to the difference in height between the heavens and the earth. Once Adam and Eve sinned, Genesis 3:7-13 shows that they were driven: by their separation from God and by their fear, guilt and shame within; they learned to handle that fear, guilt and shame by blaming others. From that point in history every person has been driven by those same five things: separation, fear, guilt, shame and blame.

Christ wants every Christian to be set free from their driven life. He wants them to learn to become led by the love of Christ. 1 John 4:18 says, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.” In order for a new Christian to become set free from their driven life, they have to be shown how to be led by the love of Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 says, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” As our children learn to be led by the love of Christ instead of driven by the fear of people, they begin to experience the liberty promised in Galatians 5:1 and 5:13 where we read, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage...For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”

We want to help physical and spiritual children learn how to help new Christians learn to think Biblically. New Christians either learn to think Biblically or continue to think in a worldly fashion. Biblical thinking will set them free so that they can be led by the love of Christ rather than continue

to be driven by that former fear. To do this, we help our children understand five ways that they can help new Christians learn the Word of God.

First, they want to encourage new Christians to hear the Word of God and hear it explained by more mature Christians. Romans 10:17 says, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” If a person that is a new Christian cannot read or understand the Word, that person needs someone to begin to regularly read the Word of God to him or her. The new Christian also needs help understanding what the Word means and that is why it is important to walk alongside new Christians and help them begin to grow in their understanding of the Word of God.

Second, they want to encourage new Christians to begin to read the Word of God for themselves. Revelation 1:3 says, “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.” Those who read and obey the Word of God are promised blessing in their lives. When I lead a person to Christ, I immediately encourage that person to read the book of 1 John every day for a month. I point out that book is only 105 verses long. Most people can read that book in 20 to 30 minutes each day. I tell them that book is written to my little children (spiritual children) to help those new Christians begin to grow and that it will answer many questions that they have about their new life in Christ. The second month, I encourage them to read 1 Thessalonians every day for a month as it is also a book written to new Christians to answer some of their questions.

Third, they want to encourage new Christians to begin to study the Word of God. 2 Timothy 2:15 says, “Study to shew (show) thyself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (KJV) I suggest that the best way to show the new Christian how to study the Word of God is to get together at least weekly for the first two months with the new Christian and study through the book of 1 John the first month and the book of 1 Thessalonians the second month since those are the two books that have been suggested to read each day.

The purpose the first month is to help the new Christian begin to take root in Christ and His love since Colossians 2:6-7 says, “As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.” Then, Ephesians 3:17-19 says, “That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height--to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” The purpose of the second month of study is to help the new Christian get many of their basic questions answered. We can encourage our children to help the new Christian learn to study by studying those two books with the new Christian and helping them learn to take root in the love of Christ.

Fourth, they want to encourage the new Christians to memorize the Word of God. Psalm 119:11 says, “Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You!” Since our goal is to help new Christians learn to transform their thinking so that they are led by the love of Christ instead of continuing to be driven by the fear of people, this and the fifth thing are the two things that will do the most to transform their thinking. When we have the Word of God memorized so

that it is in our thoughts and hearts, it also begins to transform our attitudes and change our actions.

Fifth, they want to encourage the new Christians to begin to meditate on the Word of God as they go through their day. Joshua 1:8 says, “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” Then, Psalm 1:1-3 says, “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.” As we help our children learn to show others how to meditate on the Word of God by thinking about the passage that they have memorized both during the day and at night, the new Christians are learning to transform their thinking.

We also want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to show new Christians how to put into practice in their lives the things that they are learning from the Word of God. James 1:22 says, “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” It is as we learn to obey the Word of God in our lives that we begin to see the Lord really help us grow in our understanding. Since new Christians have been driven by fear up until the time that they became Christians, they need to be shown by a caring Christian how to put what they are learning into practice in their lives. That means that we are actually helping our children learn how to become examples to these new Christians.

Psalm 119:97-100 says, “Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Your precepts.” In these verses, we see the results when we help our children develop their foundation on the Word of God and then show new Christians how to do the same. As they meditate on the Word of God throughout the day, the Lord gives them wisdom and understanding. In fact, these verses say that even a young person can develop more understanding than people much older. Psalm 119:130 gives another benefit when it says, “The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.” The foundation of the Word of God gives us light so that we can see where we are going in our lives. That allows us to be led by the purpose that the Lord has for each one of us in our lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your physical and spiritual children learn to help others build the foundation for their lives on the Word of God.