

5. Helping Our Children Work with the Holy Spirit by Becoming Examples

In our last topic, we discussed helping our children learn to work with the Holy Spirit as they make disciples. Today, we will be discussing the topic of how we help our physical and spiritual children learn to work with the Holy Spirit by becoming examples that others can follow. Here, we see that we want to help our children learn to become an example of the transformation that Christ makes in a person as He transforms our lives.

In 1 Thessalonians 1:7, we read, “So that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe.” Paul and the team with him had shown the Thessalonian Christians how to become examples to others. They also continued to encourage them to grow and become even more effective examples to others. 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13 says, “And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.” In these verses, we see that the Thessalonians were encouraged to grow and become even stronger examples by continuing to imitate Paul and the team.

We help our physical and spiritual children learn to become examples by showing them how to transform their thinking through the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 12:1-2 tells how the Lord transforms our thinking through the Word. Those verses say, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

It is reasonable to present our lives to Christ as a sacrifice, because He gave His life as a sacrifice for us. Christ died as our sacrifice for our sin. However, Christ calls us to be a living sacrifice by living a life that is holy and acceptable to God. We see that becoming a living sacrifice includes having our minds transformed so that we become conformed to the will of God instead of being conformed to the world.

Joshua gave the people of Israel a five-part process that would transform their lives and make it possible for them to become obedient to the will of God. Joshua 22:5 says, “But take careful heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, to hold fast to Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.” Here, we see the five-part process that helps to make it possible for us to transform our thinking and help our children transform their thinking so that we all become obedient to the Word of God.

First, we are to love the Lord our God. We will only show our children how to love the Lord our God as we first love the Lord our God ourselves. Moses had told the people of Israel how to teach their children. Deuteronomy 6:4-8 says, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 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.” Here, we see that we will only lead our children by example as we love the Lord with our whole heart (character), soul (thoughts) and strength (actions). They will learn to love the Lord as they see our love for the Lord.

Second, we are to walk in all of His ways. Here, we see that we are to walk in the ways of the Lord instead of walking in our own ways or the ways of the world. This happens as we learn to yield to the Lord. Romans 6:12-13 says, “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” Here, we see that presenting ourselves to God includes yielding our members as instruments of righteousness to God. Only as we yield to God are we able to walk in all of His ways.

Third, we are to keep His commandments. Joshua could write in Joshua 22:5 what he had learned in his own life from the Lord about the importance of being obedient to the commandments of the Lord. The Lord had told Joshua in Joshua 1:8, “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.” Joshua had been told that the thing that would make it possible for him to be obedient to the commandments of the Lord was to meditate on the commandments of the Lord day and night. Then he was to do all that was written in those commandments. In the same way, we are to obey all of the commandments that Christ has given us.

Fourth, we are to hold fast to Him. The word that is translated “hold fast” or “cleave” to Him is the same word that is used in Genesis 2:24. In that verse, we read, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” In this verse, we see that a man is to “be joined” or “to cleave” to his wife. Job said in Job 19:20, “My bone clings to my skin and to my flesh, And I have escaped by the skin of my teeth.” We see that we are to hold fast to the Lord just as our bones and skin are joined together. The word has the thought of being joined together or welded together. We are to be joined together with the Lord if our lives are going to be transformed.

Fifth, we are to serve Him with all our heart and with all our souls. Jeremiah described the heart of a person that has not turned to the Lord. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?” Here, we see that the heart without Christ is controlled by evil. In contrast, Matthew 12:35 says, “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.” As we compare these verses and others, we see that the heart is the spirit of a man. The human spirit without Christ is controlled by evil. The human spirit that is yielded to the Holy Spirit will bring forth good things.

Joshua told the people they were to serve the Lord with all of their heart. To serve the Lord with

our whole heart means that we must yield our human spirit to the Holy Spirit so that the power of the Holy Spirit can flow through our lives. One of the evidences of the fact that we are yielding our human spirit to the Holy Spirit is the fact that we will speak the Word of God with boldness. Acts 4:31 says, “And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the Word of God with boldness.” This helps us to realize that to serve the Lord with our whole heart means to serve the Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit and not in our own strength.

We see that we are also to serve the Lord with all of our soul. Our soul is our mind, emotions and will. To serve the Lord with our whole mind requires the renewing of our mind. Romans 12:2 says, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” We learn to renew our mind by learning to replace our thoughts with the thoughts of God. Isaiah 55:8-9 says, “‘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.’” As we learn to think God’s thoughts, instead of our own thoughts, we learn to think and act Biblically instead of in a worldly fashion.

To serve the Lord with our entire emotions will only happen as we learn to be led by the love of Christ instead of driven by the fear of man. 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.” Then, 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 we consider these verses, we see that as we yield to Christ, we will be led by His love instead of driven by our own fear. That is what makes it possible for us to love one another as Christ has loved us. It also means that our service will be service that is the result of living for Him instead of either duty or fear.

To serve the Lord with our entire will means that we will submit our will to the will of God so that we can carry out the will of the Father instead of our own will. Christ gave the perfect example for us when He prayed in Matthew 26:39, “He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, ‘O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.’” Hebrews 10:9-10 adds to this thought when Christ spoke, “Then He said, ‘Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.’ He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” Christ did the will of the Father and gave us His example to follow.

It is a great joy to see the Lord work through the lives of our physical and spiritual children. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to work with the Holy Spirit by becoming examples.