

9. The Biblical Foundation for Growth in Practical Skills

In our last three topics, we have looked at three of the five priorities that were given to Moses to help him develop godly leadership so that he and these additional leaders could lead the people of Israel effectively. Parents should have these same five priorities as they help their physical and spiritual children develop. Today, we will be looking at the fourth priority that Moses was given. Exodus 18:20 says, “And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do.” The fourth priority of Moses was to show the developing leaders the work that they must do or to put it another way, how they were to do the work of the Lord.

This is a very important priority in the development of our children. We want to show them how to do the work of the Lord. Many Christians tell others the work that they should do but they never show them how to do the work of the Lord. If we want to see our children learn to serve the Lord effectively as they grow and mature, then we must make it a high priority in our own lives to take the time to show them how to do the work of the Lord. In order to understand how to help our children learn to do the work of the Lord, we will look at the example of how Christ showed His disciples how to do the work of the Lord.

We help our children learn to serve the Lord by giving them the opportunity to observe how we serve the Lord. This is what happens as our children just spend time with us as we carry out the daily activities of our lives. Christ gave us the example by just inviting people to go with Him as He went to various places. In John 1, Christ invited two men to just spend the rest of the day with Him. John 1:39 says, “He said to them, ‘Come and see.’ They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).” In John 2, Christ invited his disciples to go with Him to a wedding in Cana. John 2:11 says, “This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.” The disciples watched as Christ changed water to wine and it caused them to believe.

Later, in John 2, Christ invited the disciples to go along with Him to the Passover in Jerusalem. They saw Christ cleanse the temple and John 2:17 says, “Then His disciples remembered that it was written, ‘Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.’” Here, we see that the disciples observed what Christ did and it caused them to remember what the Old Testament said. In John 3 and 4, the disciples observed what Jesus did in Jerusalem and the surrounding area of Judea and later in Samaria. Just as the disciples learned best by observing what Christ did, our children learn best by observing what we do. In fact, they will learn both from our good actions and also from our sinful actions.

A key thing to remember about teaching our children by example is that they will learn from what we do more than what we say. If we yell at our children, “I told you not to yell,” they heard us say one thing and observed that we did the opposite thing. Our children have not learned from what we have said. However, our children have learned from what we have done. Because we yelled at them, they have learned that it is all right to yell at one another regardless of what we said. The result will be that they will continue to yell at others.

Growing Godly Family Series – Developing the Biblical Foundation for a Godly Marriage 9. “The Biblical Foundation for Growth in Practical Skills”

Updated July 2023

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Children also observe what we do that is right. If we teach our children a verse like Ephesians 5:20, “Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,” and they see that we also have an attitude of thankfulness, they will learn to become thankful. If we teach our children a verse like Ephesians 4:32, “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you,” and have a kind and forgiving attitude, they will learn to be kind and forgiving. They will learn to do what they see us practicing in our lives.

In Exodus 18:20, we see that we are to show them how to do the work of the Lord. They learn from our example the character that will make their ministry effective. Then, they also need to learn from our example how to do the work of the Lord effectively. In Acts 20:20-21, Paul told the elders of Ephesus, “How I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” Here, we see that Paul took the elders with him and showed them both publicly and privately how to share the Gospel with both Jews and Gentiles.

Instead of just telling the elders what to do, Paul took them with him so that they could see how he shared the Gospel. In doing this, Paul was following the example that had first been shown by Christ. In Mark 1:17, Christ told some fishermen, “Then Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’” This happened about a year after Christ began His public ministry. As a result, for the next two and a half years those men had the opportunity to see how Christ shared the Gospel with others.

The disciples learned from the example of Christ and they realized the importance of showing others how to share the Gospel. As a result, in Acts 10 we see that Peter took six men from Joppa with him when he went to share the Gospel at the house of Cornelius. While reporting this event to the church at Jerusalem, Peter said in Acts 11:12, “Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man's house.” In the same way, our children will learn to share the Gospel with others as we take them with us when we are sharing the Gospel with others.

Paul took Timothy and many others with him to show them how to develop ministry skills. Acts 16:2-3a says, “He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted to have him go on with him.” Paul showed Timothy and others the whole process of planting churches from the beginning point of prayer through the process of reaching people for Christ, teaching them, training them by example and then sending them out to reproduce their lives in the lives of others.

Paul called Timothy his own son in the faith and also showed Timothy how to help churches. In fact, when Paul sent Timothy to the church in Corinth he said in 1 Corinthians 4:17, “For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.” Here, we see that

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Timothy was a spiritual son that knew how to do and teach the same things that Paul did and taught. In the same way, as you show your own children how to do the work of the Lord, they will learn to do and teach the same things that you do and teach.

In addition to showing our children how to develop ministry skills, we also want to show them how to help others develop ministry skills. 2 Timothy 2:2 says, “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” Paul told Timothy to commit to faithful men the things that he had learned by observing the ministry of Paul and then participating with him in that ministry. Timothy was to teach people the Word of God, show them the way to walk and then show them how to serve the Lord by developing their ministry skills. He was to teach these things to faithful men.

From what Paul told Timothy, we learn several things about how to help our children develop ministry skills. We see that part of the process of helping them develop ministry skills is helping them learn how to recognize godly character. Paul said to commit these things to faithful men. This means that we want to show our children how to recognize those who are faithful. First, we must be an example of faithfulness ourselves. Then, we want to show our children how to become faithful. Third, we want them to be able to recognize when a person is faithful and when a person is not faithful. In the process of teaching our children how to recognize faithful people, we are actually helping them to grow in their faithfulness.

A second key we see in 2 Timothy 2:2 is that Paul told Timothy to commit the things that he had seen in Paul to others. The word that is translated “commit” means *to teach, explain and entrust what you teach to another person so that the person can pass it on to others*. Here, we see that we are to teach our children so thoroughly that they can teach others. This would include the teaching of ministry skills. Our goal is to help our children learn how to develop the spiritual life and ministry of others. As they learn to develop others, they are learning how to teach their own children in the future.

We might summarize the process for helping our children learn ministry skills with the following steps:

1. You do while your child observes.
2. You do while your child participates.
3. Your child does while you observe.
4. Your child does that ministry on his own and reports back on what happened.
5. You do that ministry together to strengthen the ministry skills that your child is developing.
6. You send your child out to reproduce himself in the lives of others.

It is a great privilege to help both our physical and spiritual children develop ministry skills. May the Lord richly bless you as you multiply your ministry by helping your children learn to minister effectively.