

Parenting

Key Verse

"...do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."
Ephesians 6:4b

Basic Biblical Understanding

What are my responsibilities as a parent? Am I supposed to provide basic necessities (i.e. food, shelter, clothing, and security)? Am I supposed to give my children everything I never had as a child? Am I to protect them from every problem, give them every opportunity, or provide for every desire? What exactly does God require of parents?

Scripture gives a consistent answer. Besides providing for their physical needs, which Scripture assumes parents will do, the primary responsibility of parents is to train their children to know and love God.

Deuteronomy 6:4–9 (NIV) says, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."

This passage describes the home as a learning environment for knowing and loving God. Your children are to be taught about God when they sit, walk, lie down, get up, go out, or come in. In other words, at every turn of life, parents are to teach children about knowing and loving God.

As parents, we can give our children many wonderful opportunities and gifts. However, teaching them to know and love God gives them a solid foundation for life. God should be our greatest priority and deepest desire. Knowing and loving Him brings blessings unlike anything the world has to offer, and pursuing godliness is the one endeavor that "holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come" (1 Timothy 4:8b).

Verses (ask God to show you how they apply to your life)

- "Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6
- "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him." Proverbs 22:15

Helpful Questions and Application

1. God wants you to teach your children to know and love Him, but that doesn't mean you can't bless your children with a great education, opportunities, and nice things. It also doesn't mean your children have to live a sheltered, holier-than-thou existence. How can you teach your children about God through the blessings? Likewise, how can you make sure that the blessings don't become the foundation for entitlement?
2. As you teach your children, share with them your own experiences with God. Doing so helps them understand who God is and what it means to have a relationship with Him. Tell them about how God saved you and what He has done for you. Share with your children what you're learning as you read the Bible and teach them to ask, "What does the Bible say about this?" How can you begin to incorporate some of those ideas?
3. You'll never find time to train your children to know and love God. You have to make that time. Take out your calendar and ask God to reprioritize your schedule to better equip and train your children.

Additional Resources

Scripture references: Genesis 18:19, Psalm 78:1–8, Ephesians 6:1–4

WordTruth articles: ["Wisdom that Honors Christ"](#)
["Illuminating the Gray Areas of Life"](#)