

HELPING MY KIDS KEEP THEIR FAITH, Part 1
Sermon Series: I Am The Church
Next Steps Devotional Guide
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1. From your Bible, read Jesus' words in Matthew 18:2-4. What are your earliest memories of being taught to have faith in Jesus Christ? Who taught you and what difference has that made in your own life?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 4:8-11 from your sermon notes. How have you personally experienced what this passage mentions and how did you respond?
 - a. If you have children at home or take care of children, what would you say are the spiritual challenges those children face today? How are you personally helping your children or children get through the spiritual challenges they face today?
 - b. Read Hebrews 12:1, 1 Corinthians 9:24, and Isaiah 7:9b from your sermon notes. When If someone were to ask you, *"How do Christian adults and their children run the race called the Christian faith in a way to win the prize,"* what would your answer be?
 - c. As Christians, we are to have the strength, durability, sturdiness, steadfastness, adaptability, toughness, recoverability and rigidity to thrive and outlast. Why do you think some "Christians" quit?
 - d. Read Proverbs 24:10 from your sermon notes. Weak faith, compromise and pressures all go together. When you look at nature, there are times in the harshest environments you will see a lone little flower or weed growing. Why do you think this happens and how does it relate to your children thriving and outlasting the pressures put on them?
3. Our culture thrives on labels such as Nike, Amazon, Apple, and etc. These labels give an identity. As parents we reinforce identities for our children through their athletic, musical, academic and hobby activities. There is nothing wrong in many of these. The big question is: are you as a parent helping your children and/or grandchildren understand their identity in Christ? Meaning — how often would you say you have conversations with your kids or grand kids about what it means to be "in Christ?"
4. Proverbs 22:6 is an awesome verse about helping our kids keep their faith. Read it under point #1.
 - a. Read the explanation for the Hebrew word translated as "train up." Now read the first implication of what this means as well as Psalm 42:1-2 under point #1-(a)-(i)? How do you personally as a parent or grandparent create a thirst in the lives of your children as they are going about their everyday lives?
 - b. Now read the second implication of what this means under point #1-(a)-(ii). in your sermon outline. Dr. James Dobson, from Focus On the Family in his book, The Strong-Willed Child, talks about breaking the will of the child but not the spirit of the child. How do you help your children submit to God in their lives?
 - c. Now read implication #3 under point #1-(a)-(iii) as well as Proverbs 20:11. How involved are you in using God's Word, the Bible with your children so that they accept and live their lives in submitting to the truth of God found in the Bible?
 - d. In Proverbs 22:6, most people when they read the word "*child*" rightfully think a minor child. Yet, the word also refers to any child regardless of their age living with you. How intentional are you in having conversations with all your children about being Christ followers?
 - e. In Proverbs 22:6, read the phrase under 1-(c), "*. . . in the way he should go.*" Each child is different. Each child has a way they are bent to learn. They learn differently. They process things differently. Now read point #1-(c)-(i) and (ii) in your sermon outline. Do you get creative more with words or with the way you instruction your children? Do you ever feel that your words "go over their heads?" What is you own personalidz "IFP" (individualized faith plan) for your children to live out their faith?
 - f. In Proverbs 22:6, when people read "*. . . even when he is old.*" they think senior adult. Yet, you learned that is not what it means. Raising our children God's way is not an unconditional promise they will stay faithful. Too many times parents and grandparents leave the spiritual development of their children and/or grandchildren to Children Church workers and Youth Ministry workers. It requires time and a lot of it from parents. How could parents do everything they can to help protect children's faith as their grow from children, to teens, and to young adults?
5. Read Galatians 6:7 and Ezekiel 18:20 from your sermon notes under point #1. What is the point of these verses from a standpoint of parenting?
 - a. Many parents will say to their children, "*Do as I say, not as I do.*" Children can see through the hypocrisy. No parent is perfect. Every parent blows it, sins and fails. So, how can a parent help a child who hears a parent say one thing and then do another — do the exact opposite?
 - b. Our children live in a culture that is highly secularized and humanized. Values and morality are now subjective. Kids receive conflicting messages. How can a parent make sure their kids do not received smeared information, but clear information?

- c. For our kids to hold to their Christian faith is hard. It is as hard as holding onto a slippery, slimy, and squishy fish. In the same way, undefined beliefs are hard to hold onto for them. If our kids do not know what it means to be “in Christ” — to be a Christ follower — then it becomes harder for them to defend their Christian faith, to fight for their Christian faith and to stand up for their Christian faith. Do your children know you have biblically-based doctrines about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, and other issues? Can your children articulate those to the best of their ability?
 - d. Being “in Christ” has nothing to do with politics or a political party or politicians. It has nothing to do with being a “good boy” or a “good girl.” It has nothing to do with church membership or taking classes or checking boxes. Being “in Christ” has nothing to do with fundamental legalism. It has nothing to do with a set of rules or some self-help life enhancement. Read the definition of what it means to be “in Christ” or to be a “Christian” in your sermon notes. Do your kids consistently see you living out this definition? What is your evidence? Do your children consistently live out this definition?
 - e. Read Jesus words in Matthew 4:19 under point #2 in your sermon notes. Some people think they are unworthy to come to Jesus due to past sins or past failures. They will say, *“Let me clean my life up some and then I will. Let me get some things changed in my life first.”* How can you help your children see that Jesus’ leaves the choice to follow Him up to us and we should depend upon Him to change us? Why is this so important in helping a child keep their faith?
6. We live in an age of clones and duplicates. We experience peer pressure to conform. Read Romans 12:2 from your sermon notes under point #2. How would you explain this verse to a child on their level?
 - a. When we conform to our culture rather than letting the Holy Spirit transform us, it creates two major problems. The first problem is the impact it has on non-Christians around us. When they see us or our children not living out our faith consistently, they get befuddled and perplexed because we are claiming one thing, but living out something totally different. Make a list of the negative impacts this would have on non-believers.
 - b. When we conform to our culture rather than letting the Holy Spirit transform us, it creates a second major problem. It has an impact on Christians around us. Make a list of what those potential impacts could be.
 7. Read 2 Timothy 1:7 from your sermon notes under point #2:
 - a. Now read the explanation for the Greek New Testament word translated as “power” under point #2-(b)-(i). How could you consistently help a child experience this in their life?
 - b. Now read the explanation for the Greek New Testament word translated as “love” as well as the description about Jesus in Matthew 9:36 under point #2-(b)-(ii). Christians are vulnerable to see themselves as better than non-Christians. How can you help your children see their compromising peers not through the eyes of condemnation, but through the eyes of compassion?
 - c. Now read the explanation for the Greek New Testament word translated as “self-control” as well as Philippians 2:5b in your sermon notes under point #2-(b)-(iii). How can you help your children live lives for Christ that do not have conflicted minds or non-prioritized minds for Christ?
 - d. Read Revelation 3:15-16 from your sermon notes under point #2. These are Jesus’ words to the church at Laodicea. “Vomit” is a very strong word used by Jesus. Unfortunately, Christians can leave a “bad taste” in other people’s lives due to our hypocrisy. What is riding on this?
 8. Read Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:48 as well as the explanation of the New Testament word translated as “perfect.” Your purpose has nothing to do with your career or schooling. It has to do with building God’s kingdom. How are you teaching your children how to discover God’s purpose for their life and where are you seeing them fulfilling it?
 9. Read Philippians 3:14 and Ephesians 4:22-24 from your sermon notes under point #3 in your sermon notes. Do your children understand God’s goal and race that He wants them to achieve and finish? How do you know?
 10. Read 2 Corinthians 5:20 from your sermon notes under point #2. How does your children being an ambassador for Christ help them keep their faith?
 11. Read Jesus’ words in John 15:18-19. The pressure to be liked and accepted can be overwhelming to anyone but especially to our children. Jesus makes it clear that those who are “in Christ” will be hated in this world for being a Christian. We are already seeing this today. How can you take Jesus’ words here and use them to help your children keep their faith?
 12. Read your last fill-in on your sermon notes. There are 3 “c” words in your fill-ins. What examples from the Bible and real life can you use to illustrate this point to your children why this is a life or death issue?