

Slow Down

Hope Church-May 12/13

Conversation Starter: Slowing down; it's what we wish for when we have special times, when life gets hectic and when we realize our kids are growing up in the blink of an eye. While we can't impact time passing, we certainly can be purposeful about the moments we are given. Are you letting life's distractions and chaos drive your purpose or are you letting God drive your purpose? Whether you are a parent or not, there are children in our midst that need our time and instruction. So, let's seriously look at how to slow down and give God, and our children, our best.

Digging Deeper:

1. Begin with prayer. Let's praise God for the gift of children in our lives and the special task of raising them. Ask God for His wisdom, guidance and help with your specific needs. Let's lift up parents in the church so that their families may be blessed. Pray for parents you know outside of the church and ways that you may be able to connect to support them with your Christian faith so that they come to the Lord. How often are you praying for help? What changes in your prayer life, if any, do you want to be purposeful about?
2. Re-read the scriptures from the message:
 - **Proverbs 1:8-9.** This passage directly states that the father and mother have the principal charge for instructing their children in the Lord. This is a difficult task, but God describes it in beautiful imagery. Read this passage in at least one other Bible version to experience the descriptive imagery. Have you thought of Godly instruction as giving your child a "crown of grace" or adorning them with eternal blessing and beauty? How does that compare with other "gifts" you give your child?
 - **Deuteronomy 6:7.** Every minute counts. There is no time like the present. Just do it. These are sayings we have heard, but God was the first to write explicitly what parents need to do. How are you doing with this? Are there any excuses getting in the way?
3. Name what's getting in the way with your time and instruction specifically spent on prayer, worship, praise and Bible time with your kids. Now that we have prayed and read God's directive, we need to identify what the enemy is using to thwart or keep us from this most important time. Here are some suggestions to help:
 - I'm not a perfect parent! Read **John 8:7-11**
 - I am so busy! Read **Psalms 46:10**
 - I don't have all the answers! Read **Psalms 119:105**
 - They roll their eyes at me! Read **Colossians 1:11-12**
 - It's too late, I missed the opportunities. Read **Joel 2:12-13**

Whatever is stopping you; there is an answer to help in the best parenting/self-help resource of the Bible! Note the Bible verses that have helped you. You may be able to share these with another parent in need!

Bible Verse: _____

How this helps me: _____

4. Read **Genesis 49:25.** What supports do you have in place? Are you using the support available to you? Remember, you are never alone in your parenting. God has provided you

with everything you need, even if you don't always feel like that is the case. Support is also readily available in your church community. This might be a class you can take, a life group or Christian friends you can call upon as needed. Reach out if you aren't sure what next steps to take. You can send a request online at www.sharethehope.org, ask at the information desk in the lobby before or after one of the services, talk with a teacher or pastor in one of the kids' events/programs, or call the church to get connected.

5. If you are not a parent, you still have children in your life or your community that are in need. Read **Psalm 127:3 and Mark 10:13-14**. Since children are a gift from God and we are to bring them to Him, are there ways you, as a Christian, are being called to be a part of a child's life?

Personal Application: Slowing down isn't always something that will happen without intent. Jon Bloom, a writer for desiringGod.org states, "We cannot love what we do not linger over." Further, he writes, "the real or perceived societal pressure we feel to get more and more things done, and process more and more information, can be an enemy to real love and true learning." This is impacting our families, for sure. Let's be intent on lingering over God's word. Let's be intent on lingering over our children's instruction in the Lord. And this will yield love.

May God bless our mothers. May God bless our fathers.

May God bless those in children's ministry.

May God bless those supporting our families in whatever way they have been led.