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*Program
Study Guides*

**For
October 2019**



Raising Faithful Children
Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

How can parents _____ their children to Jesus Christ? How do they raise them up to be _____ to God? Today, we are looking at the challenge of _____ children to be Christians. Scripture provides the _____ both to simple questions and to our most challenging ones. If we want to train ourselves to be God's people and influence others, we have no better book than the Bible to _____ us for every good work, including the spiritual training of our children. If you miss what the Scripture teaches on any vital topic, you have missed the most valuable _____ of life. Treasure your Bible!

The Lord blessed Jackie and me with four lovely daughters. We felt the full responsibility of parenthood. God made us responsible to feed, to clothe, to train, and to protect our children. God put us in _____ of them physically, intellectually, socially, and spiritually. From the first, we _____ them as our very own souls. We had hopes and dreams for each of them. We wanted them to be happy, healthy, smart, and successful in life. More than anything else, Jackie and I wanted our children to be faithful Christians who had a _____ in heaven. We wanted them to love, respect, serve, and _____ God. We now have twelve grandchildren, whom we love and for whom we have the same _____ that they be right with God.

I'm sure you have the same love and desire for your children, that they be right with God. While children are _____ to choose how they live, you can influence them to become Christians and to remain faithful all through life. You can't make decisions for them, but you can _____ them to know the Lord. Proverbs 22:6 reminds us, "Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not _____ from it."

Our reading today comes from the Words of God through Moses, Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

The apostle John wrote, "I have no greater _____ than to hear that my children are walking in the truth" (3 John 4). We don't know whether the apostle John had a wife or became the father of any children of his own, but he was writing to his _____ children. Whether spiritual or physical, parents love their children and want what is _____ for them. John rejoiced because his spiritual children were walking in the _____. They believed the truth and _____ as the truth taught in God's Holy Word, the Bible. Christian parents want to know their children are _____ to God. I've rejoiced with other parents whose children were faithful and _____ with parents whose children have strayed from the truth.

Perhaps you remember the verse that describes how _____ grew up "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in _____ with God and man" (Luke 2:52). We certainly _____ our children will grow up like that. We want them to _____ in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. We pray they'll make _____ choices in life, that they'll be healthy, and they can be a friend to God and have Christian friends. In all our dreams, we've never forgotten the

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words of Jesus in Matthew 16:26, “For what will it _____ a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” The souls of our children are the only thing that will _____ when this life is over. So it’s important to prepare the soul!

How can we bring up faithful children? How can we _____ them to love and serve the Lord? First, raising faithful children _____ at the beginning. When Christians learn they have a child on the way, they should begin _____ every day for the child’s welfare and for wisdom to know how to raise the child. New parents don’t get an instruction _____ with the baby, and every child is different. So they need God’s _____ to help them to know how to deal with each child in a way to bless the child. The Bible says, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him _____ God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him” (James 1:5). This isn’t talking about some special revelation, but it’s the everyday wisdom that we all need to live faithfully.

Second, Christian parents can _____ hymns with their children in their arms. A little child may not understand all the _____ that their parents sing, but they can sense their tone of voice and hear their heart. They can sense the _____ of their parents. Children learn to love God from their mommas and daddies, and the best way to start out a _____ life is to sing hymns of love for God. If you want God to be in the life of your little child, then He must also be in your life. Some of the happiest memories that your child will ever have are those precious moments as a little child singing songs of _____ to God with you.

Third, from the very beginning decide that you will _____ regularly with the church and take your children with you. **Read Hebrews 10:23-25.** Assembling with other Christians regularly keeps you spiritually _____. Loving and faithful teachers and Christian friends at church can make a positive impact for _____ on your child. If you want your children to love the Lord and His church, then assemble with God’s family regularly and worship and learn about God.

Fourth, parents must assume the primary task of spiritually _____ their children. You cannot _____ that to others. God gave you, as parents, the primary responsibility to train those children spiritually, and He gave them to you to do just that. No one has a greater opportunity or responsibility than you do to help your child get to _____. The Bible says to fathers, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to _____, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). As the spiritual _____ of your homes, fathers, you can do much to influence your children to love and to live for the Lord. It’s tragic in our time that many fathers are _____. Many children, sadly, never _____ their fathers. Some are orphans, but more often than not the fathers are absent for other _____. In those cases, _____ must do all they can to help their children to know the Lord.

Mothers can do _____ to lead their children to the Lord. Timothy became the Christian man that he was because of the _____ in his life. The apostle Paul told Timothy, “I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt _____ in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well” (2 Timothy 1:5). According to Acts 16:3, Timothy’s father was _____. It fell to his mother and grandmother to _____ him about God and the Scriptures. Their faith _____ Timothy’s faith. Mothers, if you don’t have a husband to help

you, or if your husband doesn't share your faith, don't let that _____ you from doing all you can to bring your children up in the discipline and the instruction of the Lord.

In many cases today, grandparents have the responsibility for their grandchildren. Grandparents can make a _____ difference in the spiritual lives of their grandchildren. I've known many grandparents who regularly _____ spiritual lessons to their grandkids and brought them to worship. They made a difference!

Fifth, make the Word of God a _____ of your everyday life. **Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9 again and see how it reveals a powerful key to raising faithful children.** According to Deuteronomy 6:24 and 10:13, God gave us His Word, His covenant, for our _____. When the Words of God, the Words of the Bible, live in our hearts, they help us in a multitude of ways to _____ in faith, to make the right choices, and to avoid the moral pitfalls of life. According to Romans 10:17, "faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the _____ of Christ." Nothing is more important to your children's spiritual development than a knowledge of God and His Word. God's Word will nourish your children with the truth that they need to live a faithful life. It will teach them what to avoid and how to avoid it. It will keep their hearts _____ toward God and shape their consciences for good.

The Word of God teaches us how to _____ our neighbor, how to _____ our enemies, and how to _____ the wrongs that we suffer. The Word of God _____ people toward sacrifice instead of selfishness, toward a work ethic instead of laziness, toward responsibility instead of blaming others, toward authenticity instead of hypocrisy, toward love instead of apathy, toward kindness instead of passing by on the other side, and toward the truth instead of error. The Word of God teaches that God _____ us in His own image, and we aren't random accidents. The Word of God explains where humans came from, why we are here, and where we will go after we die. Faith in God _____ children identity, meaning, and purpose. You can't give your child anything more _____ than the knowledge of God in the Bible, who they are and Whose they are.

I shudder to think how empty and sad our lives would be _____ God and His Word. Those who are trying to push God and the Bible out of our society are _____ to your children. They are _____ your children out of the blessing of their Christian heritage. When Israel rejected God and turned to idols, God sent them _____ to bring them back. God said through the prophet Hosea, "My people are destroyed for _____ of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the _____ of your God, I also will forget your children" (Hosea 4:6).

Parents, the surest way to _____ faithful children is to keep them reading and studying the Word of God; and the surest way to _____ your children's hope of a better life is to reject God's Word. Wherever the Bible is read and respected, people _____ better and wiser. Wherever the Bible is _____, life grows meaningless and evil. It turns inward, selfish, and immoral. The farther that people get _____ from God, the uglier they become to one another. Life becomes _____, and people begin to abuse the old and the children and even the unborn. I don't want a spiritually _____ world without God for my children. I want them to _____ in the light and in the love of God.

Sixth, parents, teach your children _____ and reverence. Children who are respectful learn how to _____, and in time how to discipline themselves. Children who don't respect their parents or God find their lives _____ of heartaches and failure. Parents also find their lives full of heartache over their children. Parents must establish loving authority over a child _____ in life. If they do, they'll find their children happy and secure. But if parents don't gain their children's respect early, they will have a battle with their children for years; and no one will be happy. Proverbs 29:15 says, "The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother."

The Bible says, "The Lord is exalted, for he dwells on high; he will fill Zion with justice and righteousness, and he will be the stability of your times, abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; the _____ of the Lord is Zion's treasure" (Isaiah 33:5-6). When children learn to respect, and revere God they find _____ is stable and abundant. Jesus came that we might have life and have it more abundantly. Nothing is more crucial, nothing is more crucial than knowing that we are accountable to God for the lives that we live.

Seventh, give them your _____ and blessing. Little children often come to understand their heavenly Father _____ their relationship with their earthly parents. If children have the security of their parents' love, they will learn to _____ in the heavenly Father's love. Children who never feel valued by their parents will find it _____ to feel valued by God. Children who never find forgiveness from their parents have a harder time believing _____ can forgive them, too. Children who have parents that reject them often think God might reject them, too. Children can arrive at the wrong conclusions about God when their parents don't _____ them as they should. I've known some children who had to _____ until adulthood and they left home before they ever understood how much God loves them. Oh, parents, teach them early! Teach them well about God!

When your child reaches an accountable age, knowing right from wrong, you must teach them God's will and how to _____ the gospel and become a Christian. Teach them what God expects of them when they become a Christian. God saves us by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8); and we can't _____ our salvation, but God gives us conditions for our salvation. God expects us to love, trust, and _____ Him. Teach your children to _____ the Lord Jesus. When they love the Lord Jesus, they'll find living for Him a _____! To persuade our children means teaching them intellectually, and also touching their hearts. Teach them facts, teach them about the Lord, and teach them to love the Lord Jesus. Teach them what He expects of them, but also how He is gracious and forgiving when they fail. Give your children _____ that they can live the Christian life.

Faith and love move us to _____ according to God's will. It will lead us to turn away from sin in repentance and to turn to the ways of the Lord. Repentance gives up the _____ life of sin and turns to a life filled with love and service to God and others. Repentance heals our souls and gives us the _____ to please God rather than ourselves. Faith and love mean we will _____ Jesus Christ as the Son of God and as our Lord. One who loves God will want to be baptized into Christ and have his sins washed away. One becomes a Christian when God buries him and raises him up in baptism, forgiving his sins and giving him newness of life (Romans 6:3-4).



Keeping Teens Faithful Proverbs 3:1-8

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

Being the parent of a teenager provides one of the _____ challenges of life. Today, we'll see what Scripture says about _____ faithful teenagers. God's Word not only teaches _____ to believe, it also teaches how to live righteous and fruitful lives for the Lord. No other book provides the wisdom, the spiritual insight, and the practical advice about relationships and life that the _____ provides. When you fail to study God's Word, you cheat yourself out of a treasure of _____. The Bible can give you the wisdom you need for your own journey of faith and can help you _____ your children faithful as they mature into adulthood.

The Bible not only provides some of the _____ things we can do to help our children grow in their faith, it also helps us _____ the things that hinder faith. You can't _____ your children to do what is right if you aren't practicing what you're teaching them. Your actions will speak louder than your words, and your teenagers are old enough to see whether you're _____ in your faith and devotion to God. Teens are looking toward the day when they can make their _____ decisions and live as they please. If they lack a solid spiritual foundation, or if they see hypocrisy and compromise, they'll likely fail to take the Lord and His Word seriously. Parents, devote yourself to the Lord and _____ His Word. This will help your children _____ in the Lord as well.

Today's reading comes from the wisdom of Solomon in the book of Proverbs 3:1-8.

Read Psalm 119:9-11. The _____ of all Christian devotion arises from the Scriptures, the Bible. Because of the Scriptures, we can come to know God, to know Christ, to know the truth, and to know the Christian life. We must not wander from the commandments but _____ them up in our hearts. This will _____ us from sinning against God.

God gave us the book of Proverbs to help parents spiritually _____ their children as they grow older and begin to face the struggles of life. Proverbs is a _____ resource for parents who want to help their teenagers _____ faithful to God. We know God's Word, found in the Bible, teaches us how to _____ in life as a follower of Christ. Solomon says by inspiration, "My son, do not _____ my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you" (Proverbs 3:1).

Parenting is a lifelong _____. When God first gives us our children, we begin to consider what we will do to _____ our children responsibly. As Christians we want them to become _____ than good citizens. We want them to live godly, committed lives in _____ to God. Every godly parent wants to see his or her children stay _____ to God. **Read what the apostle Paul wrote to the church at Colossae in Colossians 2:1-3.** Godly parents want that wisdom for their teens.

The first thing you can do to influence your teenagers to serve the Lord is for you, parents, to _____ the way. Parents, you must make a commitment to a daily _____ with the Lord Jesus. You can't lead your children to serve the Lord if you aren't willing to serve Him yourself. If you're

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half-hearted, or if you're a phony, or if you're only a one-day-a-week Christian, you won't be able to lead your children to be _____ committed to Christ. There are no perfect parents, I understand that, but parents who openly put the Lord first in their lives have the best opportunity to reach their children for life. Solomon said to his son, "Give me your heart, my son, and let your _____ delight in my ways" (Proverbs 23:26). Parents, do your children delight in your ways as a Christian?

You must set the _____ of the life that you want them to live. If you want them to be moral, then _____ for them a moral lifestyle. If you want them to _____ up their speech, then you must clean up your speech. If you want them to avoid bad _____ that can hurt them, then show them how to abstain from destructive behaviors.

Your children will _____ how to live and how to react to life from you. If you get angry often, why would it surprise you when your child shows anger? If you hold a grudge when your teenager misbehaves, how will he learn what it means to be forgiven? Your teen will live out his Christianity not only by how you live, but also by how you _____ him or her. Sadly, some teens quit the Lord because of the _____ their "Christian" parents treated them. Others quit the Lord because they saw compromise and hypocrisy in their parents' spiritual lives. If you want your children to be devoted to the Lord, then you _____ devote yourself. You must show yourself an example in "speech, conduct, love, faith and purity" (1 Timothy 4:12). Don't let your children look down on you.

The second thing you can do to influence your teens is to _____ regularly for them and with them. Pray for them to _____ like Christ. Pray for them to _____ the temptations they face. Pray for them to find _____ friends and pray for their friends. Let your teenagers know that they are important in your heart to the point that you will pray for them _____.

When you pray, ask God for wisdom to guide you in raising your son or daughter. Each child is different and unique. What works with one may not work with another. You must love them all, but to love them properly means you must _____ them well and what they need. Since children go through phases of life, you need to keep _____ through each phase. A good way to keep track of your children is to pray _____ them about the most important matters of life.

The third thing you can do is to _____ the main thing the main thing. Don't let the distractions of life build a _____ between your family and God. The Lord Jesus said, "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek _____ His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:31-33).

Families are so _____ with activities here and there, they can easily drift away from the Lord. School, sports, and other events can take up so much time that little is _____ for the Lord or for the family itself. Some families have no _____ for a spiritual life. Parents must learn to say _____ both to what is wrong and to what crowds out God. If you love your children—I know you do—love them enough to teach them the _____ and to keep them involved in a spiritual life. Love them enough to _____ them what they most need to hear. Love means telling your teens what they _____ to hear, not what they _____ to hear.

The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to urge Timothy to “pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness” (1 Timothy 6:11). If we spend all our _____ on other things and give God only what’s left over, we’ll _____ what is really important. Some parents worry more about their children getting into a prestigious university than they do getting into _____. Your high school student knows that. Why then will it surprise you that he’ll _____ more on getting a good education and a good job than staying in church? If your child conquers the world but loses his soul, what _____ will all his accomplishments be?

The fourth thing that you can and must do if you want to influence your teenagers for the Lord is to teach and train them in the _____ of God found in the Bible. “How can a young man keep his way _____? By keeping it according to Your _____” (Psalm 119:9). That is, the Word of God. The number one thing young adults say _____ them faithful to the Lord and to His church through their twenties was the teaching and training that they received growing up. No matter what age your children are, they must continue to _____ God’s Word diligently. The Bible provides enough challenge that a lifetime is not enough to know it thoroughly. God urges us, “like newborn babies, long for the _____ milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord” (1 Peter 2:2-3). Again, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

We should get rid of the notion that we can entertain and _____ our teens into the faith. Some churches spend _____ amounts of money to provide activities that they think will keep their children involved. Some of these activities are fun but have little spiritual _____. Some teens get so involved in their youth group that the youth group replaces the _____. When these teens get too old for the youth group, all of a sudden they feel out of _____ with the whole church. Our youth need to know that they need the church for _____. We cannot entertain young people into Christ; we must get them involved in serving the Lord as _____ of the whole congregation. We must _____ them for a life of service.

Many of the _____ questions come when children get old enough to ask those questions. Parents must continue to _____ in knowledge of God’s Word so they can help their children _____ hard questions. Have you ever wondered how it is or why God chose Abraham to be the _____ of the faithful? In Genesis 18:19 the Lord said to Abraham, “For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to _____ the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.”

Parents must be able to give their children _____ why they believe in God, why they believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, why they believe the Bible, and why they should be members of the church. Parents must often _____ God’s teaching. They should know what God wants us to believe and _____. Parents should build a spiritual _____. They should find books that help them _____ what the Bible says about the moral and spiritual topics that arise as life passes. They should be like the noble-minded Bereans and receive “the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). If your children

_____ you a Biblical question, don't rest until you find God's answer in Scripture. Don't discourage questions because that's how they _____. Help them find answers that will sustain their faith.

As parents, let's consider our great responsibility to train our children to know and to _____ the Lord. The prophet and priest Ezra "set his heart to _____ the law of the LORD and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel" (Ezra 7:10). Parents too must set their hearts to study God's Word, to practice it, and to teach it to their children.

The fifth thing that you can do is get _____ at church and in the work of the Lord. Teens _____ tremendous spiritual and moral challenges today at school, from the media, and from their peers. They need the encouragement of their parents and other godly teenagers. It helps to know that there are others who _____ their faith in Christ and share their moral values. God gave us the _____ to help us through the challenges of life. When Christians gather to worship, to study, and to serve the Lord, their faith and their commitment grows _____.

Churches have always been _____ of their Bible classes and youth programs, and I'm thankful for them. But God didn't give the preacher, the youth minister, or the Bible class teacher the _____ responsibility for spiritually training your children and your teens. He gave that responsibility to you, parents, first and foremost, and especially to _____. The church's responsibility is not to _____ the parent. Rather the church should train the _____ in how to train their children spiritually. Church leaders, I'm speaking to you. If you want to _____ the church, train parents in how to train their children spiritually. You will _____ every family within the congregation!

The church is always just one generation from falling _____ from God. The book of Judges speaks clearly about how generations _____. One generation can be faithful, while the _____ is unfaithful. Sometimes children turn out to be devoted to God in _____ of their parents. Decide that you're going to be a help to their _____ and not an obstacle! Take up your cross! Lead your children to follow Jesus Christ.

Parents, start _____ with training your children. Be consistent. Don't wait until they're teens to _____ teaching them essential Scriptures, Christian attitudes, respect for God, and about reasons to believe, are important. Devote yourselves to the _____ of leading your children to trust in the Lord and to love God with all their hearts, with all their souls, with all their strength, and with all their minds. You have no greater task and no greater responsibility than to bring your children up in the discipline and the instruction of the Lord.

Have you become a Christian? Have your children put on Christ? As teenagers, your children are ready to confess their faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and to regard Him as their Lord. They are now old enough to become children of God by repenting of their sins and by putting on Christ in baptism (Galatians 3:26-27). Baptism is when God unites us with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection according to Romans 6:3-7. Baptism is an immersion in water, but it leads us to the blood of Christ (Romans 6:3). Baptism is when God washes away our sins (Acts 22:16) by crucifying us with Christ and freeing us from sin (Romans 6:6). God wants to free you from sin and to make you His child; why not obey Him, today?



Loving But Firm
Psalm 127:1-5

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

Every child _____ parents who are both loving and firm. Today, we're exploring God's _____ on how to be a godly parent. God's Word provides a library full of _____ in how to deal with others, and that includes how to be a good parent to our children. God, the Father, is the best _____ of a good parent. Some children are easy to love and are compliant, while others _____ and fight for their independence. God asks parents to both love and provide the spiritual discipline that they need to _____ in faith and love.

God's gift of children is such a _____. We can only be thankful for every son or daughter that God gives us; but children also provide a _____. The doctors who delivered our children didn't give us an instruction _____. Jackie and I took classes on how to care for our children physically, but dealing with a child's spirit and personality is another matter. Like other parents, we _____ many challenges with our children. They were mischievous sometimes, rebellious sometimes, and little _____ at other times. We loved them and wanted to give them the very best _____ we could. We made some mistakes, but the Word of God, and the example of God our Father, was our best _____.

We can all improve as parents by _____ to God and to Scripture. The best parents are those who love and _____ God. Though we're all imperfect and prone to mistakes, we can _____ from God's Word and start today being a better example and a better parent. When you grow more like Christ, the members of your family will _____ it. They will appreciate your changes and will _____ God. The closer you _____ to God, the better opportunity your children will have to know the Lord.

Our reading today is from the book of Psalms 127:1-5; a psalm of Solomon.

Parents have different _____. Some parents believe in being permissive; others think they ought to dominate their children. Still other parents, sadly, _____ their children's greatest needs for love and guidance. Each of these styles of parenting has _____ consequences for children. Children do indeed live what they learn, and how parents _____ with children will profoundly influence how a child sees and reacts to life.

Permissive parents tend to be warm and supportive, but they are _____ in establishing and enforcing rules and limits for their children. They often _____ their children to misbehave without any consequences. We've all seen children who were really naughty and had parents who did _____ to stop the misbehavior. Such a child is a _____. He knows he can do what he _____ and get away with it. He grows to understand that rules and limits are not really firm, and he can _____ the rules to suit himself. Unfortunately, because he has never been controlled by his parents, he has a hard time controlling _____. The Bible says, "The rod and reproof give _____, but a child left to himself brings _____ to his mother" (Proverbs 29:15). Again

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Proverbs 29:17 says, “Discipline your son, and he will give you rest; he will give _____ to your heart.”

God expects parents to give their children the rules and limits that they need to keep them from _____ themselves or others. Moses said, “Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which you shall _____ your sons to observe carefully, even all the words of this law. For it is not an idle word for you; indeed it is your life” (Deuteronomy 32:46-47). We must _____ our children to take the Word of God, the Bible, seriously. They will take God seriously when they _____ to take their parents seriously. This begins early.

Perhaps you remember the old priest Eli who had two worthless sons who did not know the Lord. These young priests took larger portions of meat than they should and were immoral with _____. Eli said to them, “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. No, my sons; it is no _____ report that I hear the people of the Lord spreading abroad. If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him? But they would not _____ to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the Lord to put them to death” (1 Samuel 2:22-25).

When children refuse to listen to the _____ of their parents early in life, they refuse to listen to other authorities as well. We must learn to _____. Tragically, some children grow up thinking the _____ don’t apply to them. They learn this from their parents. A disobedient child will _____ his teachers, the police, his employers, and anyone else who tries to exercise authority over him. The breakdown in authority in our society reflects the breakdown of authority in the _____. God says to children, “Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord” (Colossians 3:20).

For the most part, children don’t create problems; they _____ them. Parents who cannot discipline themselves often _____ discipline their children. If a father and mother are not _____ authority themselves, they cannot exercise authority over others. It’s only when parents _____ to the Lord that they can exercise properly _____ spiritual and physical authority over their children. Children are happiest and they feel most _____ when they have parents who lovingly give them firm rules and guidelines to keep. They have a greater sense of identity and _____ in life. They see the _____ in doing what is right. Loving discipline _____ children.

Read what the Bible says in Hebrews 12:5-11.

Second, other parents tend to be too _____ on their children without giving them the love and support that they need. They frequently give their children unbending _____ with no explanation. These children may get punished and do not know _____. Some children grow up never _____ to satisfy or please their parents. When parents expect more out of children than they are able to give, the child grows up feeling like a _____ and small in his own eyes. This harshness either leads the child to withdraw in fear or to rebel against the parent. Some become so angry at their parents that they _____ anything that has to do with the parent. Often that rejection includes their faith.

God said to the Colossians, “Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose _____” (Colossians 3:21). Too often parents automatically say no when their children ask for something when the parents should listen carefully and _____ each request. Parents often change their _____ and create problems for their children, who never know what to expect from their parents. Fathers and mothers should _____ their children, not discourage them. Discouraged children are fair _____ for Satan and the world. When a child does not get the love that he needs at home, he’ll _____ for it elsewhere.

If a home is truly Christian, it’s a _____ of encouragement. In such a home, the child finds _____ from battles, and yet strength to fight the battles and carry the burdens of growing up. He finds a loving heart, a watching eye, a listening ear, and a helping hand. He doesn’t want any other place—home meets his _____. In this kind of a home, it is natural for the child to _____ Christ and want to live for Him.

Third, some parents simply _____ their children. Perhaps the saddest phenomenon of our day is the “_____ father.” More than forty percent of the children born in America are born to _____ mothers. Where are the fathers? Many children today don’t even _____ who their father is. Then there are homes where dad lives there but is unavailable to his children. He’s too _____ with his job to have time for his children. A survey in one town indicated that fathers spent only thirty-seven seconds a day with their small sons! Parents, spend time with your children. They need you. Children _____ to know that their parents, as busy as they are, have time for them. Love is spelled T I M E, time.

What kind of parent _____ his children? **The Bible tells us how a parent should teach his children: read Proverbs 4:1-9.**

Parents, our actions _____ louder than our words. When we make time to train our children and help them to _____, they will appreciate it. Children learn values, morals, and priorities by observing how their parents _____ and how they react to everyday life. If parents show a deep love and _____ for God, their children will soak in that spirit. But how can your child know how you love God if you don’t tell and show them by spending _____ with them. The greatest blessing that you can bestow on your children, parents, is a _____ heritage of love and respect for God.

The best way to raise children is to _____ for them a firm but loving Christianity. Provide one that doesn’t _____ to worldly pressures but remains full of love and compassion. A good father repeats Proverbs 23:26, “Give me your heart, my son, and let your eyes delight in my ways.” If you want your children to love you and to love the Lord, you must win their hearts with firm but loving Christianity. When you love your children and live a _____ life for them, they will delight in your ways.

Parents should listen and be patient as their children _____ to them. A listening ear and a loving heart go together. “You took time to have me,” one child said to her father, “but you won’t take time to listen to me!” Men, your children won’t evaluate you based upon your ability to “father a child” but on how you’ve raised them. Life isn’t _____ for children, especially Christian

children, these days. Their problems might seem _____ to you, but they're _____ to them! Christian parents must listen carefully, share the feelings and frustrations of their children, pray with them, and seek to encourage them. Make your home the _____ place on earth!

Loving and firm parents usually have clearly _____ rules and limits. They expect their children to _____ their instructions. They take the time to tell their children _____ they make these limits, and give a clear warning when a child has gone too far. They're not afraid to discipline their child appropriately for his misbehavior because they know the _____ of discipline. They also give _____ support and encouragement to their children. They show physical affection and spend time with their kids. The loving and firm parent provides a healthy and balanced combination of control and compassion.

A child blessed with such parents _____ listens to his parents and all authorities. He learns to love and believe in God. He learns to communicate with his parents and find the _____ that he needs in difficult times. He knows right from wrong and the underlying _____ why. From this foundation, he learns self-control.

It's true! Loving parents who spiritually train their children give them the _____ to a happy and meaningful life. The Bible says, "How blessed is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding. For her profit is better than the profit of silver and her gain better than fine gold. She is more precious than jewels; and nothing you desire compares with her. Long life is in her right hand; In her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are pleasant ways and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who hold her fast" (Proverbs 3:13).

My friend, loving and serving God is the most _____ thing you can do for your family's sake. Loving and serving God will _____ you to become a better father and mother, a better spouse, and a better brother and sister. Love your family, care for their needs, really listen to them, support them, and guide them as a faithful and loving spouse and parent. You must walk the walk as well as talk the talk. When you live close to God, you open the _____ for your children to live close to God as well. If you live a worldly, careless life, don't be surprised if your children follow your ways rather than your teaching.

There's no substitute for being a genuine Christian. We can't _____ our children if we only pretend to believe but privately live worldly lives. First John 2:15-17 says, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is _____ away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever."

Give your heart to the Lord, trust him, repent of your sins, confess his name, and be baptized so that your sins will be forgiven; and then live according to God's Word. The best thing you can do for your children is for you to become a Christian and for you to live the Christian life faithfully. Why not start serving God today!



When Children Fall
Proverbs 4:1-6

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

We'd love for our children to live Christian lives, but many _____ from God. Today, we're thinking of what we can _____ when children fall away. The Lord God gives us a great _____ of how to deal with our disappointments, how to forgive others, and how to live faithful lives.

I once heard a psychologist say that being the parent of a teen was the most difficult _____ of life. The challenges facing our children touch _____ of us. The devil uses every trick and scheme he can to _____ young people astray. He tells them they're products of evolution rather than _____ by God. He tells them to ignore God and introduces them to the _____ of sin. He slanders what is _____ and he makes sin attractive. He uses their _____ and the media to seduce them into ways of thinking and behaviors that ruin their lives. Parents often _____ about what their children see and who their friends are. It's tough to be a young adult today!

The moral downfall of America _____ our youth the most. More than four in ten children born in America are born to unmarried mothers and fathers. Half of all American children will _____ the breakup of a parent's marriage. Millions of children now live in _____ parent or blended families. School teachers can never _____ that the last name of a child is the last name of its parents. Children who grow up in homes with both natural parents often have both parents working and only a limited _____ for their children. The "traditional" home where dad worked and mom stayed home with the kids is _____ these days. It's no wonder our children are morally and spiritually _____. This is why many young adults _____ early in life. We need Christian parents!

Our reading today comes from the book of Proverbs 4:1-6 and deals with a father's instructions to his son. This is good sound _____, one that we need to heed.

Parents who love their children do all they can to keep their children _____ in church, but many young adults wander away from the faith when they go to college or move out on their own. People fall away from the church for a variety of _____. Some get their feelings _____ by a church member and the experience leads them to stray. Some see people they thought were _____ Christians living sinful lives and think the whole church is full of hypocrites. Still others get caught up in their own sins and simply drop out because they're _____. Others go to a college with professors who do not believe in Jesus Christ and they _____ believing themselves. Still others fall away because they're _____ with their parents, and they know quitting church will hurt them.

When children fall away, parents have to figure out what has _____ the problem and take steps to bring their children back. Sadly, people do as they _____ and you can't make them do what is right. That doesn't mean that you're _____, however. You can do something to make a _____ in your child's life. Scripture says, "But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the _____ of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to _____ life. And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show _____ with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh" (Jude 20-23).

First, you can "build yourselves up in your most holy _____." Whether your children are teenagers or adults, I know you parents take the _____ of your children seriously. You want them to remain _____ with God and to live with him forever. The best thing you can do for your children is to remain _____ in your faith. Live what you believe consistently; be _____ to the Lord and to His cause. When your faith is true and sincere, you will stay close to God. You'll also _____ your authentic faith to your sons and daughters. They will respect you for being genuine in your faith.

Second, love them. Everyone _____ love. Love doesn't mean that you condone or _____ their sins; it does mean that you won't give up on them. Loving them means letting them know you _____ for them in spite of the life that they're living and want what is best for your children. While parents must stand firm against what's sinful, that doesn't mean they can't love their child. Many young adults need to understand that love doesn't necessarily mean _____ of every behavior. God can love us as his children and yet _____ our sinful behavior. Jesus hated the sins that we all commit because he knew how destructive they are to us; and He loved us all enough to go to the _____ for us.

The Bible says, "For while we were still _____, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a _____ person one would dare even to die—but God shows his _____ for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8). Christ acted out of love to _____ sinners. He wanted them to be _____ and was willing to bear the cross so that they could come out of their sins.

Some people have the mistaken belief that Jesus' death on the cross allows them to find _____, but without change or repentance; but this is not the case. When Jesus rescued and forgave the woman caught in adultery, He said, "go, and from now on _____ no more" (John 8:11). Young people have to _____ the grace of God is not some license to stay in sin, but expects us to _____ our lives to conform to His will. Some young people think condemning sin, as the Bible does, is mean-spirited, but nothing could be farther from the truth.

Read what the Scripture says in Titus 2:11-14. God does not save us to _____ us where He found us. He saves us to help us become _____ people. God's way is to bless us and not leave us in destructive, sinful lifestyles.

Third, you can _____ for them. Some folks must go through _____ times before they see where their sins are leading them. Pray they'll come to their senses. Pray they'll remember the love and grace of God. Pray they will see the need to _____. Pray that their hearts will be _____ to the Word of God, the Scriptures. Pray they will see the error of their ways. Pray every day and don't _____ praying. We never know all that God is doing to answer our prayers, but we know that God _____ and He wants every person to do what is right.

The Bible says, "The Lord is not slack concerning his _____, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should _____, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). He won't twist the arm of your son or daughter; but God can use all kinds of circumstances to _____ people up to their spiritual condition. Your son or daughter has a conscience, and who knows what will _____ that conscience and turn their hearts. They still can _____ their lives around.

Fourth, you can _____ with them and encourage them to come back to God. The Bible says, "Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should _____ him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be _____" (Galatians 6:1). Parents, your attitude toward your young adults may be the real _____ in winning back their hearts. If you become self-righteous or get _____, you will certainly end any meaningful communication. But if you gently and humbly approach them in love, they may _____ to you.

Approaching other people to lead them back to God is not an easy _____. It takes humility, gentleness, and patience. When we recognize our _____, it opens the door for others to recognize theirs. The apostle Paul told Timothy, "The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be _____ to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and _____ from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will" (2 Timothy 2:24-26). Parents, read this passage, study it, and meditate upon it as you strive to be God's _____ in reaching out to your child.

Fifth, help them find the _____ to their doubts. When children are small, they borrow from your faith; but when they grow older, they must work through the great questions of life to possess their _____ faith in Christ Jesus. Don't rebuke your children for asking hard questions; rather _____ them find the answers to their questions and doubts. There are answers. No problem you'll ever _____ is greater than God and you.

The God of the Bible is _____ the God of creation and the Ruler and Sustainer of the Universe. Nothing has changed; the Bible is still inspired of God and utterly trustworthy. The problems that people face in life, however _____ they may be, does not mean God doesn't care or won't help. The questions that people ask about God, Christ, the Bible, or suffering have good, solid _____. The answers are in God's Word, the Bible, and they can give

comfort and assurance to parents and children alike.

How does a faithful parent _____ with an unfaithful child? God's Word has an answer. You've probably heard the story of the Prodigal Son. **Read what Jesus said in Luke 15:11-26.**

Just as God _____ His children when they return home spiritually, so parents long for the day when their children come home to the _____. If you're a prodigal, come home to the Lord. If you're a parent of a prodigal, keep an _____ out for your son or daughter. They may be going through a tough time and may _____ you and the Lord. Listen to me carefully, people can and do repent! Pray for that day and be constantly ready.

Your child may come home; and when he or she does, forgive him and bring out the best robe. He probably came home because you and your faith are the only _____ that he or she has left. God extends His _____ to us as a magnificent blessing. Grace should open our _____ to forgive others when they return penitently. God is in the forgiving and saving business when people _____ themselves in penitence. Psalm 51:17 says, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise."

When we come to God in love and faith, repenting of our sins, and willing to _____, God receives us with an open heart. In baptism, God _____ away our sins. God is waiting for the prodigal to come home, and, parents, you can do no better than to _____ the father of the prodigal son.

Millions of people have _____ worshiping at church and living the Christian life. Are you one of them? I'm grateful that you watch this program; and that means you still have some _____ of a spiritual life. But you need the Lord and the fellowship of other Christians to _____ your spiritual life strong and healthy. If you're living your life without the _____ of God, think about your spiritual condition. Would you want to stand before God as you are?

Many young adults _____ to church when they marry or start having children. But if you haven't returned, you might consider how God can help you _____ life's challenges. You can face life with God's love and blessing or you can face life without God. The prodigal son had to _____ the hard way that he needed God. I'm grateful that he came home, and I can't help but think that there are many prodigals who also need to come home.

If you haven't yet become a Christian, place your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and repent of your sins. Repentance is a change of heart that leads to a change of life. It means leaving the ways of sin and following the Lord Jesus. Upon the confession of your faith, be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. When you're immersed in water in the name of Jesus Christ, God will add you to His church; He'll make you His child; and raise you up to a new life in Christ. I hope you'll be baptized today if you've never been! If you became a Christian several years ago but have wandered away, come home! Confess your sins and repent of them. Ask God to forgive you, and get involved with the church.