

WEST VIRGINIA BAPTIST CONVENTION



Developed by Discipleship Ministries
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HOUSEHOLD DISCIPLESHIP RESOURCE

FOR THE LOCAL CHURCH

Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.

If you are a parent, you know the above words are easily memorized but putting them into action is another story! In our world today parents can easily go to the library, bookstore or to many places online to find out how to raise children. There is a surplus of childrearing methods, programs and philosophies. Parents can take their pick and hope the “claims” produce the results.

There is one plan that is overlooked by many and unknown to others; that is the childrearing and family plan given to us by God. Yes, God knew we would need help and He provided it for us.

This booklet was developed to help local churches introduce and improve their support of parents and guardians of children and youth in the area of discipleship. Family discipleship is not a new concept. God has shared His plan from the beginning and commands family leaders to take on the responsibility of discipling the family.

The purpose of this resource is:

To give local church leaders material to begin a serious discussion of the role of the family in discipleship.

To raise the awareness to parents and guardians that the church is not the first or only vehicle for discipleship. The family is first and vital to the spiritual growth of its members.

To assist pastors in sermon preparation for the Household Discipleship.

To provide a list of books that could be used for further consideration and learning about the role of the family in discipleship.

Possible uses include:

A month long emphasis on Household Discipleship, using sermon suggestions and bulletin inserts

Once a month sermon and insert on Household Discipleship Bible Study, small group or Sunday School class study

Book Club – choose one of the books on the Household Discipleship Resources list, read and discuss

It is the prayer and hope of the Discipleship Commission of the West Virginia Baptist Convention that this resource will be a starting place for your church and for families that your church touches. May our Master say of all of us,

“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and

- Hold a “Parent Prep” class for new parents regularly.
 - Offer “Seasoned Parents” continuing education opportunities.
 - Be on the lookout for good materials that can be used in home devotion and discipleship. Regularly share the information with parents.
 - Recognize and affirm the role of parents by having an annual parent dedication.
 - Start a prayer partner program for parents.
4. Make Household Discipleship a **ministry priority**.
 5. Avoid regular “compartmentalizing.” Plan for meaningful times throughout the year that families worship, learn and serve together.
 6. Avoid the “outsourcing approach.” The church should not be the place where parents “outsource” the responsibility for discipleship to youth workers, children’s workers and Sunday School teachers.



THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN HOUSEHOLD DISCIPLESHIP

The local family of Christ (the church) has a responsibility in the strengthening of families. The church must stand as the extended family ready to encourage, assist and support parents in their role. Church leadership has the duty to stand with parents in their work of discipleship, valuing this work and aiding them with sound teaching and useful, worthy resources.

Have you heard of a wingman? The true definition of a “wingman” is a person who flies an airplane behind and outside of the leader’s plane for protective support. The wingman is able to guide the leader and give needed information to avoid losing the plane. The wingman watches the leader’s back.

In like manner the church must be the “wingman” for parents.

Here are a few ways the church can help:

1. Understand the Scriptural Foundation of Household Discipleship.

At least yearly, preach and teach on appropriate scripture passages that serve as a foundation for Household Discipleship so that parents understand their responsibilities and the methods that Jesus used, so the church understands its responsibilities to families.

2. Reinforce, strengthen and uplift the Gospel work being done in the home. Call parents to serve as primary spiritual leaders and then equip them to do so.

3. Provide continuing ongoing training for household discipleship.

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HOUSEHOLD DISCIPLESHIP RESOURCES

Discipleship in the Home by Matt Friedeman. Published by Francis Asbury Society.

Very practical book with useful ideas. Much of the material was created for a course taught at the Wesley Biblical Seminary.

Parent Driven Discipleship by Michael Kennedy. Published by Energion Publications.

Useful guide for parents to take the spiritual reins of their family. Very Biblically based and practical. Could be used in a small group study.

Family Driven Faith by Voddie Baucham, Jr. Published by Crossway.

Conservative author. A call for men to take more leadership in the spiritual affairs of the family, and a call for parents and the church to return to biblical discipleship in and through the home.

Disciple Like Jesus For Parents by Alan Melton and Paul Dean. Published by Calvary Press.

Sticky Faith: Everyday Ideas to Build Lasting Faith in Your Kids by Dr. Kara E. Powell and Dr. Chap Clark. Published by Zondervan.

This is a guidebook for Christian parents who want to spiritually lead their children. It is packed with ideas for household discipleship and contains many interesting stories of family life. Also available is a guide, The Sticky Faith Guide for Your Family. Good for small group study.

Experiencing God at Home by Kim Blackaby and Rick Osborne. Published by Lifeway

A series of nine different booklets based on the 7 Realities of Experiencing God by Henry Blackaby. Includes a variety of games, stories and activities parents can use during the study. A leader's guide and children's activity packet are available. Appropriate for school age children up to 6th grade.

Think Orange...Imagine the Impact When Church and Family Collide by Reggie Joiner. David Cook Publishers.

Combining the influence of church and parents to disciple children is the topic of this book. Strategies for accomplishing this

walk. The process is not age specific. It can exist between two adults as well as between an adult and a youth. The 2015 Christian movie, *War Room* is a powerful testimony not only to the power of prayer, but also to the power of discipling. In this film, a mature Christian woman spiritually guides a less experienced Christian woman through various crises in her life. By the end of the movie, the younger woman is ready to become a spiritual mentor, and the older woman is praying for a new mentee. Can you identify someone God is nudging you to spiritually lead? Be willing to say to that person, "I want to help you get to the place God is calling you to be."

If you are looking for ideas to begin, consider the following:

- First, be sure to disciple your family: children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews.
- What about any neighborhood children or children within your church? *Kids Hope USA*, a program which matches one church with one school for the purpose of one-on-one mentoring, might be available in your area.
- Your church may have existing discipling opportunities, such as programs where children are "adopted" by a "grandparent" or even where a child adopts a "grandparent." Both options offer the opportunity to foster spiritual growth.
- What about embracing a college student? Invite the student to dinner weekly and share faith experiences.
- Encourage someone serving in the military by mailing a postal fixed-rate box of goodies and Christian reading material.
- Pray that God will help you cross paths with someone who can use your mentoring. It might be a co-worker or someone you haven't even met yet. Be open to the opportunity and pray for God's guidance.
- If you have not yet seen the movie *War Room*, consider watching it to see an example of mentoring through discipleship.

We live in an uncertain world. The only sure thing is our faith



Discipling: Fostering Spiritual Growth in Others

Legacy, WVBC's 2016 theme, encourages each of us to leave a bequest to the next generation through discipleship, evangelism or missions. What better way to leave a legacy than by discipling a younger-in-the-faith Christian! Be willing to come alongside a less mature Christian and offer vision and guidance.

The most obvious discipling opportunities involve youth. While parents are the most influential people in their children's lives, children also need adult spiritual guides outside their families.

- Look within your church for intergenerational service projects and get to know the youth.
- Learn their names, identify their hobbies, and share your faith story with them. Such intergenerational activities will help our churches create an environment where it is likely that the youth will develop a lasting commitment to God. While we cannot force the next generation to become disciples of Jesus, we can show them the love of Christ in such a way that it is likely they will remain true to their faith.

The discipling relationship is an intentional process; one deliberately seeks another to empower in their Christian

PREPARING TO BE A DISCIPLER - DOING WHAT WE DO

SCRIPTURE FOCUS: Luke 2:8; Deuteronomy 6

Introduction: Now that the Christmas season is past and we look forward to a New Year, the question asked is this, "What's the challenge that faces us for this New Year?" Church business must always be considered Kingdom business. Yet, with every passing year we face the challenge of teaching, and mentoring our family to live for Christ.

The Christmas story found in Luke 2 is without doubt the most read and well known of all stories. We have heard it from the days of our youth to this past Christmas. Yet, included in this wonderful witness to the glorious Incarnate Christ is one statement that is often overlooked and never expounded upon. Verse 8 mentions the shepherds and the statement is, "keeping watch over their flock." Plainly put, these were folk **doing what they do**. On a day-to-day, Sunday to Sunday basis we are more like the shepherds than any of the others who are mentioned.

As pastors, parents, grandparents, Sunday School teachers, group leaders and the list goes on, we are in a very real sense, shepherds, **doing what we do**, keeping watch over our flock. Thinking of this, is this not what discipleship is all about? Watching over our flock, **doing what we do**. Teaching, encouraging and mentoring folk to live for Christ.

One of the most powerful passages of Scripture in all the Bible is found in Deuteronomy 6.

CONTEXT: Deuteronomy 6

- The final three sermons of Moses
- The final instruction of the man God had chosen to lead the Israelites to the promised land and to mentor and encourage them to love God and serve Him only. This is possibly the first teaching of discipleship found in Scripture.
- The reason for the teachings were: 1. There is a new generation on the scene and Moses knows that without Godly instruction, positive witness to God's faithfulness, and sound encouragement to follow God always, this generation is headed for hard spiritual times 2. Moses is now old and he is aware his days are numbered.
- Chapter 34:5 Moses' death

Deuteronomy 6 – A Sermon from Moses

Preface: Vs. 1-2 there are two powerful words to bring to mind that details with urgency what discipleship is all about: **Vs. 1 Teach and Observe**

Note the order: Teach that these commandments will be observed: Where and when, "in the land which you are crossing over to possess."

Listen carefully: Discipleship is always urgent for every generation.

1. Premise of Discipleship: Vs. 1-2

- Based on Word of God
- All that follows in the passage is a command of God, not a suggestion
- Note: at the end of chapter 5:31, we catch a glimpse of the seriousness of what God is challenging Moses to do. **Mark the words:** Vs.5:32 "be careful to do as the Lord your God has commanded."

What commandments and statutes?

A. The 10 Commandments: Given to Moses and to be observed by all who reverence and honor God. Note: Deuteronomy 6:1-4: Obedience to God is a must and the results are blessings, Vs 5-10 Further commands for each person and what they must do.

B. Book of Leviticus: Teachings concerning the following: worship, sacrifices, offerings, giving and receiving, worship days and Holy days, etc.

Note: Is not what we do in church in our day just as important? All these were given so that God would be honored and folk would follow Him.

C. Church family: We are challenged every day to teach, encourage and instruct folk about following God.

The premise of it really is just: **doing what we do!**

Illustration: John Wooden, the great basketball coach taught us this "If you don't have time to do it right, when will you have time to do it over?"

2. Passion of Discipleship Vs. 4-5

Take Note! The Bible teaches us that what drives our passion, directs our living.

Matthew 6:21 Jesus taught, "Where your heart is, your treasure will be also."

Jesus quotes the teachings on Deuteronomy 6:5 (see Matthew 22:37)

What does Deuteronomy 6:4-5 mean?

The supremacy of God vs. 4. God is one! He cannot be divided, nor

participating. If older children are participating, encourage each one to be the reader on a certain night of the week. There is great value in reading the words for yourself. Bible reading plans and devotional guides are available from a variety of publishers. Be sure to select a guide that will work with the "personality" of your family and your faith.

Teaching - This part should include information and discussion for everyone to be able to participate in. Discussion questions should be concise. For example: What happened in the passage? What is being taught? How does this apply to you? The teacher should primarily be one of the parents/guardians, but on occasion and with the right preparation children can be the "teacher" as well. Many devotional guides have information, illustrations and questions for everyday.

Prayer – This time in the family devotion can be a teachable moment as parents/guardians lead the family in prayer together. Be sure to begin with praise and adoration for our God. If appropriate, ask each person to share a heartfelt praise. Help each other discover a praise if need be. Follow this time with confession. This is not a time for everyone to "tell all," but help children to realize that all persons need to ask God for forgiveness. Finally, prayers of intercession and personal requests should be voiced. God listens and wants His children, whatever age, to talk with Him.



How to Have Family Devotions

Set aside a regular time – Family mealtimes and bedtime are good. However, this will depend on your family dynamics and level of busyness.

Work to pick a time when members of the family can focus on what is happening.

Put down the phones and gadgets, and place them on silent. If need be, take the phone off the hook.

Find a comfortable setting – This may be at the family table, the living room or game room.

Give a few minutes for the family to settle down. This can be done through playing or singing a quiet song, or through a short period of silence.

Include the following:

Bible Reading – A parent can be the reader if children are too young to be able to read. If there are beginning readers in the house, give them an opportunity to read short passages from the Bible themselves. Consider using a version that is easy to read if children are

can we pick and choose how much or what attribute we want of Him.

The superlative of Love, vs. 5: All heart, all your soul and all your strength.

Illustration: During the puritan OLIVER CROMWELL'S (1599-1658) reign as Lord Protector of England (1653-1658) a young soldier was sentenced to die. The girl to whom he was engaged pleaded with Cromwell to spare the life of her beloved, but to no avail. The young man was to be executed when the curfew bell sounded, but when the sexton repeatedly pulled the rope the bell made no sound. The girl had climbed into the belfry and wrapped herself around the clapper so that it could not strike the bell. Her body was smashed and torn, but she did not let go until the clapper stopped swinging. She managed to climb down, bruised and bleeding, to meet those awaiting the execution. When she exclaimed what she had done, Cromwell commuted the sentence. A poet beautifully recorded the story as follows:

At his feet she told her story,
 Showed her hands all bruised and torn,
 and her sweet young face still haggard
 With the anguish it had worn,
 Touched his heart with sudden pity,
 Lit his eyes with misty light.
 "Go, your lover lives," said Cromwell;
 "Curfew will not ring tonight."

Where love reigns, God reigns.

3. Point of Discipleship Vs. 6

Mark the words: in your heart: Possess it!

Psalms said, "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against God. (Psalms 119:11 KJV)

Vs. 7 ff: Gives us the importance of "Teaching and observing."

Just read the words and you get it.

Just listen for the Voice of God in the verses.

Just feel the urgency in the message.

Just sense the importance of every word.

Conclusion: Discipleship. Is just doing what we do. Keeping watch over our flock - shepherding, encouraging and instructing our folk to search for God.

Developed by:
 Doc Adkins

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES OF DISCIPLESHIP

SCRIPTURE FOCUS: Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Intro: When everything else in life is evaluated and considered in light of its importance; there is no greater ministry than that given to parents. Your children are your greatest investment in the future. The Bible is clear when it reminds us that children are a precious gift from the Lord, **Psalms 127:3-5**. We must remember that our children have been placed in our lives for a just a few short years. We are not to force them into our mold, but we are to do everything in our power to mold them into the image of Jesus Christ.

Deuteronomy 6:1-9 gives us some much needed *insights* into this matter of **Parental/Guardian Responsibilities of Discipleship**

I. PARENTS/GUARDIANS MUST LIVE BY EXAMPLE Deut. 6: 1-3

Parents must be walking in a right relationship before the Lord or they will never have the influence in their children's lives that is needed. In other words, you will never be able to lead your children somewhere you have never been.

A. The parent must walk in the fear of the Lord. – We are told in Deuteronomy 6:2 that we should “*fear the Lord.*” A parent’s primary responsibility is to walk in the fear of the Lord.

B. The parent must obey the Word of the Lord –There is no better witness to our children than the sure knowledge that mom and dad take the Bible seriously; and that God’s Word is the rule of the home.

C. The parent’s obedience leads to blessings –God has promised to bless those who walk in His will and follow His Word - **Psalms 1:1-3**. Children need to see that God will do what He has said He would do.

II. PARENTS/GUARDIANS MUST LOVE BY EXAMPLE Deut. 6:4-5

A. The parent’s love must Be Focused On The Lord. – There are to be no other gods in our lives. Too often, children see parents putting everything in the world ahead of God. Matthew 6:33

B. The parent’s love must Be Fixated On The Lord –Our love for Him should consume us totally, **Matthew 22:35-40**. When we love Him like we should, we will teach our children to be faithful to the things of God.

What steps will you take this week to begin these changes? List them. How can your church family help? List the ways. Who will you talk to this week about these needs? List names. (See below for a place to make your lists.) YOUR spiritual lifestyle DOES matter to your family. Consider these questions: What are you consciously or unconsciously teaching about God and His place in your life? What spiritual disciplines do you follow? What is your first reaction when tough times come your way? How do you handle conflict? What is your worldview, especially when it comes to those not like you? What is your understanding of family and your responsibility in it? What does God say about all these things?

To Read and Study This Week:

Changes I need to make in my spiritual lifestyle:

Kinds of help I need to make the above changes:

Steps I will take this week to make the above changes:

Ways my church family can help me with these changes:

Person or people I will share with this week about my changes, need for help and encouragement.



Discipleship is a Lifestyle

What is a lifestyle? A lifestyle is a way which a person, group or culture lives. It includes motivations, attitudes, moral standards, wants, needs, worldview, values and the forming and sustaining of relationships.

Everyone has a lifestyle. Our lifestyle is simply the way we understand ourselves and the way we relate to the world in which we live. Our lifestyle is impacted by both the natural and social environments in which we live.

What is your spiritual lifestyle? Is your spiritual lifestyle one which has and is leading you forward and closer to Jesus? How is YOUR spiritual lifestyle impacting the spiritual lifestyle of your spouse, children or grandchildren?

Followers of Jesus are to be persons striving to make God the center of their being. This means the center of what they think, do and say. This means a daily, intentional decision to face themselves and the world in a way that is not directed by themselves but by God. A tall order but one that is attainable and worthy with God in the lead!

Developing a Christian spiritual lifestyle is the first step in leading your family in household discipleship. What changes do you need to make? List them. What kind of help do you need to make these changes? List them.

III. PARENTS/GUARDIAN MUST LEARN BY EXAMPLE Deut. 6:6-9

- A. **Parents need to Study the Word of God** –If we expect our lives to impact our children, then we must be transformed by the Word ourselves. Nothing can happen through me until it first happens in me.
- B. **Parents need to Share the Word of God** –Verse 9 says that we are to “*diligently*” teach the Word to our children. The word “*diligently*” means “*to sharpen.*” It is about teaching them by example and by explaining the things God would have them learn. **1 Thessalonians 2:11** gives **3 ways** to influence our children:
1. **Exhorted** – “*To call to one’s side.*”
 2. **Comforted** – “*To encourage.*”
 3. **Charged** – “*to discipline.*”

Conclusion: *May I remind you that it is far easier to build a child than to repair an adult!* May the Lord help us do everything in our power to be the best parents we can be to His praise and glory.

Illustrations:

Story One:

Parenting is indeed one of THE most difficult jobs a person can take on. Check out this story:

Every conscientious parent recognizes how difficult it is to exercise his God-given authority over his children. The delicate balance of being tough yet tender is not easy to maintain. Many parents intensify a rebellious spirit by being dictatorial and harsh. Others yield when their authority is tested. When a strong-willed child resists, the pressure to give in for the sake of peace and harmony can become overpowering. I am reminded of the mother who wanted to have the last word but couldn't handle the hassle that resulted whenever she said no to her young son. After an especially trying day, she finally flung up her hands and shouted, "All right, Billy, do whatever you want! Now let me see you disobey THAT!" (*Our Daily Bread*). Have you ever felt this way?

Story 2

The man in the supermarket was pushing a cart which contained, among other things, a screaming baby. As the man proceeded along the aisles, he kept repeating softly, "Keep calm, George. Don't get excited, George. Don't get excited, George. Don't yell, George." A lady watching with admiration said to the man, "You are certainly to be commended for your patience in trying to quiet little George." "Lady," he declared, "I'm George." Has this ever been you?

Developed by:

TEACHING LIKE JESUS

SCRIPTURE FOCUS: MARK 4:33 – 34

When it comes to learning how to make disciples in our household, I can think of no better example than Jesus. While it is true that Jesus did not have a family of His own, He did have an “oikos” (the Greek word for household); a group of people that He impacted on a day-to-day basis. There is much we can learn about teaching our families (oikos) about Jesus from how Jesus lived and taught.

In our text for today, Mark tells us:

Jesus taught in parables.

Jesus taught what they could understand.

Jesus used parables (story) so they could learn.

Jesus explained the meaning of the stories He taught.

In the field of education, teachers often talk about “teachable moments.” A teachable moment is the time when the student is most interested in learning. It is usually unplanned and somewhat spontaneous. For the moment to have the maximum impact, the teacher must address the questions or situation and impart the knowledge that the student is primed to receive.

Jesus was an expert in using life situations and student questions to impart knowledge to His listeners. Sometimes the teachable moment presented itself in the form of a question.

What must I do to inherit the kingdom of God? (Mark 10:17)

Which of the commandments is of greatest importance? (Mark 12:28)

Who is my neighbor? (Luke 10:29)

Each time a question was posed to Jesus, it was a teachable moment. This was true even if the one asking the question was insincere and trying to trap Jesus. Many times Jesus would challenge the one asking the question to clarify what was really being asked. Other times, Jesus would answer the question and challenge the learner to apply the answer to their lives.

In our families, we must encourage questions. Too often, we expect our children to accept what we believe without question. However, as we learn from Jesus those seeking truth will ask questions – even hard questions. It is when the questions are asked that the teachable moment comes and we have the best opportunity to teach.

Jesus loved stories! More often than not, the stories Jesus told were in the form of a parable. A parable is a short story that

These two points are key in the idea of household discipleship. First, the discipleship-making process in your home began when your child was born. Discipleship does not begin when a child learns to walk or talk. It does not begin when the child starts formal education and learns to read. The process begins when the child is welcomed into the world and begins to learn ever so slowly about love, security, trust and relationships. Through parents or guardians, children begin their foundational understanding of self-worth, worth of others, their place in the world, their responsibility in the world, who is to be followed and why.

Household discipleship is not a program, nor is it a series of lessons to be taught, completed and graduated from. Household discipleship is a life long journey involving parents, children, family and friends learning, sharing and traveling a spiritual journey together.

Second, household discipleship must be custom fit. A custom fit suit is made just for one person. The fabric may be the same as fabric used in another person’s suit, it may be the same color, use the same thread, and even be the same style, BUT the measurements are unique to you. It is **your** arm length, pant length, waist size and shoulder measurement. It is hemmed the way you want it. There may be others who can put it on, but it fits best on you. Household discipleship must take into consideration at all times the personality and fit of the family. Families can use the same materials, ask the same questions, have devotion time at the same time, attend the same church, etc. However, the personalities, learning differences, schedules and ways of interaction of individual families must be taken into consideration.

God is remarkable in that He made our families and He has a specific way for our families to grow in Him together.

and



dumps into the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean. Two drops of water, two entirely different destinations, but one small turning point that determines the outcome.

Eli made the choice not to correct his sons and this had great consequences. Hophni and Phineas chose not to obey the commands of God that they knew.

A Quote: My grandmother used to say, “every choice you make in life will come back to bite you or rescue you somehow and sometime.”

Custom Fitting Household Discipleship

In a recent article appearing in Anthology (Volume 3, No. 2, October 2015), from Mission Nexus, titled “Making Disciples Across Cultures,” Charles Davis shares thoughts on disciple-making. Davis shares that “disciple-making starts before conversion and goes on for a lifetime. It does not end after a course of ten sessions” Davis also shares, “. . .no two disciples learn of Jesus the same way and we must realize we cannot mass produce disciples or mechanize the process of disciple-making.”

conveys a religious message or truth. The parables Jesus used to teach were typically based on common-everyday life and activities. From these stories, Jesus would demonstrate for His followers the spiritual message that they needed to learn.

Another aspect of the way Jesus taught His household was that He was always teaching them. Yes, there were the “scheduled” times in the temple. But the overwhelming majority of Jesus’ teaching was while they were going about their daily business.

As they walked along the road Jesus would point out something that was going on around them and use it to teach them. Whether it was watching the farmer cast seed as they walked by or observing the mustard plant beside the road; Jesus would call these things to the attention of His followers and explain how it applied to their spiritual journeys.

Jesus’ stories remind me of the object lessons that my mother would teach. She would take an everyday object and use it to teach a Biblical truth or life lesson. As we strive to teach our children spiritual truth, we should always be looking for opportunities to teach them from everyday life activities and surroundings.

Jesus also made sure to teach at the level of understanding of His listeners. He could debate the deepest minutia of the law with the Pharisees. But when He taught the crowds, He taught simply so they could understand. With His disciples, He even took extra time at the end of each day to explain for their deeper understanding the meaning of what had been taught.

As parents, we must be sensitive to where our children are in their spiritual journeys and customize our teaching to their individual levels. We must see how Jesus did this even among His disciples.

The bottom line is Jesus making disciples was what He was about. It was not something He did in His spare time. It was not something He did when the mood was right. It was not something He did when everything else was done. It was what He did while He did everything else.

If we really want our children to be disciples of Jesus, we cannot leave it up to others no matter how trained they may be. We must take full responsibility for our own household and impart our love and knowledge of Christ into them.

Moses said it this way: “These commandments I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them upon your children. Talk with them about them when you sit at home and when you walk

Developed by:
John E. Simmons
West Virginia Baptist Convention

along
the
road,
when
you
lie

RUINESS RESULTS

First Baptist Church Beckley

SCRIPTURE FOCUS: I Samuel 2: 12-36 and 3:10-14

Major points

- Head knowledge is not enough when it comes to following the will of God, we must act according to what we know.
- God expects parents to take the responsibility to help children learn to apply God's teachings to life.
- God expects parents to lovingly and firmly correct children and direct them toward a Godly life.
- Side stepping responsibility can have disastrous results for children and parents.

Additional information about the scripture:

The Offering

The offerings referred to in the passage are most likely peace offerings. The peace offerings were the only animal sacrifices in which the offerer and his family partook of a portion of the offering.

The peace offerings were to be communal meals between God and His people – celebrations of the blessing and fellowship. God, the priest and the offerer and his family each ate a certain portion of the animal. God was to receive His portion first, usually the kidneys and lobe of the liver along with the fat that covered the innermost parts of the animal. This portion was offered up in fire to God. The priest portion was then taken and then the portion for the offerer. The order in which the offering was portioned out was very important as was the amount of the portions.

Who was Eli?

Eli served as the High Priest at Shiloh. He was a descendent of Aaron (brother of Moses), who was first named priest of God to the Hebrews. Eli would have been brought up in a priestly family and had the great opportunity of learning about God and being prepared to spiritually lead the people. Eli was also a judge, which was considered a great honor and responsibility.

Eli was the father of Hophni and Phineas, who also would have had great opportunity for spiritual and secular study and were serving as priests. In order to serve as priests they had to know the Law of God.

Wrongs of Hophni and Phineas (sons of Eli)

According to scripture (I Samuel 2:12-17) Eli's sons, Hophni and Phineas were known as worthless men. The word used in the Hebrew to describe them is "belial," meaning "without worth." Verse 12 very plainly states that they had no regard for the Lord. Despite their upbringing, the two men were greedy, self centered, violent and conniving. They were hypocrites and used their position for their own gain. They had head knowledge of God and His commands but did nothing with this knowledge in their personal lives.

I Samuel 2:2-17 describes the way in which the men stole from those bringing offerings and from God. The men would send servants into the homes of those making the peace offerings and the servants would grab whatever portion they wanted from the pot. This was outrageous behavior as the priest and the offerer were to have different parts of the animal. The servants were also taking more than they deserved, which meant they were stealing the offerer's portion. Note that Hophni and Phineas knew which houses were giving offerings as one of them would have been officiating at the sacrifice. They did not do the deed themselves but sent others to do the dirty work. They also gave the servants permission to use force if necessary (vs. 16).

The worst offense was that Hophni and Phineas were demanding, through their servants that the offerer give them the uncooked portions of the meat for the sacrifice that included the FAT portions, which were designated for God only. This action would have elicited being thrown out of the community or even death (see Leviticus 7:25 and 17:10-14)

Wrongs of Eli

I Samuel 2:22-26 relates Eli's actions upon hearing about the wrongdoings of his sons. Verse 22 even tells that the men were with prostitutes, which was a pagan religious custom. Verses 23-25 share Eli's rebuke of behavior of his sons, which was a verbal reprimand. However, Eli does not hand out the appropriate sentence to them for their deeds. They are not restrained and punishments are not inflicted as Eli, the High Priest and Judge, ought to have given and would have given to anyone else. They are given "a slap on the hand."

Ruinous Results

I Samuel 2:26-27 includes the pronouncement of punishment on Eli's house. Eli and his sons have become unworthy of their positions, and the priestly line of Eli would come to an end. See I Samuel 3:10-14 also.

Illustrations

There is a point along the Continental Divide high in the Rocky Mountains in Colorado at which the waters of a small stream separate. It would not seem to matter much whether a drop of water goes to the left or to the right. But the outcome of those drops of water is totally different. One drop goes to the west and eventually flows into the Colorado River and empties into the Gulf of California and the Pacific Ocean. Another drop goes east until it flows into the Mississippi River