

- ***Read II Timothy 3*** As Paul writes to Timothy, his "son in the faith", he warns him about difficult times that will soon be upon him and how it is that he ought to overcome them. People would become self-centered to the extreme, and they would give no regard for how their actions might affect others. Paul tells Timothy that the way for him to overcome and defeat the wickedness of these times was for him to fully rely on God's Word. He was to be fully dedicated to these Scriptures, and he was to use them as his weapon against the dark influences of his day.
- For some, this task might be extremely difficult, but for Timothy...he would be able to use the Word rightly because the Scriptures had always been present in his life. Paul specifically mentions the fact that Timothy was extremely familiar with God's Word because he had been taught of them since his childhood. It is very evident that Timothy's mother and grandmother, Eunice and Lois, were dedicated to teaching Timothy about their Heavenly Father and His Will. **(II Timothy 1:5)** Because of their strong efforts, Paul mentions that Timothy is convinced of the things that he has learned, and I believe that Paul was confident in Timothy's ability to persevere and overcome the difficult days ahead.
- Timothy was shaped by the teachings of his mother and his grandmother, and I don't think that can be argued for even just a second. Because of their great efforts to teach Timothy about God, Timothy was able to use that knowledge of God and his faith in Him to respond well to difficulties and adversities. I learn from this that it is of the utmost importance for parents to set their children on the right path from a very early age in regards to their knowledge and faith in God. It is so important because, just as it did for Timothy, kids are shaped early on and they will view the world based upon important truths that they are taught from an early age. This fits well with the wise words of Solomon from **Proverbs 22:6**, "Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it."
- Seeing as how I am going to have my first child within a matter of months, this has been on my mind much recently. I have thought a lot about what type of parent I want to be. I have thought thoroughly about what things I want to stress early on in my kid's lives, and I have done this because I only have a few short years to try to shape and mold them into the type of people that they need to be. Now, let me pause and say that I very much recognize the fact that kids will be who they are based upon their own decisions. I get that and will not argue that, but that will not stop me from doing everything I can to teach them some very important things while I have the time to do so.
- With these thoughts in mind, I would like for us to consider 7 things I want my kids to know. These are 7 things that I believe are foundational in shaping a child into a God fearing and God obeying individual. These are all truths that are foundational to our faiths, and they are just as important for us as adults to understand and believe as they are for young people to understand and believe. A failure to acknowledge these 7 things would be disastrous, and I certainly do not want that for my children or myself.

I. God Exists

- A. I want them to be able to look around and recognize that there is something greater than themselves in this life. Simply observing nature and the complexities of it should lead us to the conclusion that there is a higher being in this world.
- B. In fact, Scripture points this out to us. In writing to the Romans, Paul makes the point that they were without excuse for their sinful behavior because God had not hidden Himself from them.
(Rom. 1:18-21)
- C. I want my kids to know that God is alive, present, and working still even today. He is the Creator of the universe, He allows every thing to continue on, and we are indebted to Him for all things.
- D. I want them to know that He is the giver of all good things **(James 1:17)**, and we, as His creation, ought to seek Him out in all things so that we might come to know the wisdom and understanding that He possesses. **(Prov. 2:1-9)**

II. God Loves Them

- A. Secondly, I want them to know that this God not only exists, but that He intimately knows them and that He loves them so much. David discusses God's intimate knowledge of us, even while still in the womb, in **Psalm 139:13-17**.
- B. God, with His all knowing nature, is fully aware of each of us. He knows our wants and our needs, and He loves us so much that He strives to provide for us those things that we are in need of.
- C. The greatest need being that of the forgiveness of our sins. They'll know of God's love, and that He showed it through the giving of His Son on the cross. **(John 3:16)**
- D. I want them to know about God and to know of God's love for them and for all people, so that they will come to understand and know His love and not live for themselves but instead live for Him. **(II Cor. 5:14,15)**

III. Satan Is After Them

- A. As much as I wish I only needed to teach them about God and His good love for them, I must also teach them about the fact that Satan walks about seeking out his next victim. **(I Peter 5:8)**
- B. They need to know that he is out for the destruction of their souls so that they will be, as the verse says, of a "sober spirit." Meaning that they are aware and on guard against him and his ways.
- C. I want them to know that Satan is crafty and that he isn't going to pull any punches because his desires are only for evil and destruction. He will use whatever means necessary to destroy the soul of God's greatest creation. **(Eph. 6:10-13)**
- D. I want my kids to keep their heads on a swivel so that they will be on guard against Satan, and that starts with them knowing that he is after them.

IV. They Will Make Mistakes

- A. As hard as it might be to recognize at times, I must admit and teach my kids that they are not perfect and that they will make mistakes. This isn't because they are terribly evil people, who are bent on doing wrong, but they are human and we make mistakes as humans.
- B. As Paul writes to the Christians in Rome, he lets them know that they had no right to act as if they were superior to others based upon the fact that all people, Jew or Gentile, were guilty of sin. They both were in need of justification of faith because they were all guilty of sin. **(Rom. 3:21-24)**
- C. My kids need to know they make mistakes because without an acknowledgement of their mistakes they won't know that they are in need of God's forgiveness. But not only that, I want them to avoid possessing that attitude of superiority. We are not to elevate ourselves as if we are something special. Even if someone else does sin, we are to approach them with a humble attitude recognizing that we are not perfect and are in need of correction at times, as well. **(Gal. 6:1)**
- D. I am not perfect, and my children will not be either. They need to recognize that as soon as possible.

V. They Must Own Their Actions

- A. Not only do I want my kids to recognize that they will make mistakes, but I want them to fully understand that they must take responsibility for their mistakes, and really for all of their actions. Few things have had a greater negative impact on our society than that of young people not taking responsibility for their actions.
- B. Far too many young people have been raised to believe that their actions have no consequences or that the consequences are not theirs to own. The result is what we sadly see in our society. We see young people disrespecting and hurting those around them without fear for what comes next.
- C. The truth is that all of us are responsible for our actions and our actions alone. No one will be responsible for what I have done, and I will be responsible for no one else. The judgement day will consist of God making me accountable for my actions and mine alone. **(II Cor. 5:10)**
- D. I will do everything I can to protect my children, but they must understand that their actions have consequences and they must own those actions.

VI.They Will Suffer Through Good & Bad Times

- A. I want my kids to know and understand that they will suffer through good and bad times, and that just because they choose God doesn't mean that they will have a problem free life. Service to God isn't a magic pill that you can take that will give you an easy going life from them on out.
- B. Sadly, many people are led to believe that this kind of thing is actually true. Many are misled into believing that Christians have problem free lives because they follow God, and when bad things happen....many leave the faith because they think that God isn't real or actually with them if bad things happen to them.
- C. The truth of the matter comes from Jesus Himself. When speaking to His Apostles, He tells them that they will be hated for the name of Jesus...meaning that because they are teaching His Name, they will be hated. **(Matt. 10:22)** While this was specifically spoken to them when discussing their work for Him, this is still true for us today. People will hate us because we strive to teach Jesus and because we live according to His standard.
- D. Paul takes it even a step farther when he tells Timothy in our beginning text that "all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." **(II Tim. 3:12)** We will have good times and bad times in this life, and I want my kids to know that bad things happen to good godly people just like they happen to people who don't live for God

VII.The Goal Is Heaven

- A. Then finally, I want to instill within my kids the fact that heaven is our goal in the next life and that they need to be making preparations in order to make that goal a realization.
- B. As we mentioned in the last point, there will be bad things that we will go through in this life. This world is broken and full of pain and suffering, and it is not our eternal home. Paul, in **Philippians 3:20,21**, stresses to the brethren in Philippi that our citizenship, as Christians, is in heaven. He makes this point in the context of suffering in this life.
- C. We are willing to suffer through difficulties in this life because we realize that something far greater waits for us in the next life. We are awaiting for that day when God will transform this poor broken body into a body that is full of glory, a body that will never suffer or die, again. That can be our reward if we will obey God in all things and suffer patiently for His Name.
- D. More than anything else, I want my kids to possess this goal within their hearts. I want them to live every day with this goal in their minds so that their decisions will be dictated by the achieving of this goal in that last day.

These things that I want my kids to know are life shaping. If they believe these things to be good, beneficial, and true then they will live their lives a certain way. They will respect and honor the God that they believe in, and they will strive to do all that they can to stay away from Satan and his will. They will know that they aren't perfect and they'll admit their mistakes. They will strive for heaven in all that they do, and Lord willing we will all make heaven our eternal home. These are things I want my kids to know, but they are things that I must be convinced of and know first. May God help us to keep these things close to our hearts so that we might glorify Him in all that we do.