

# GROWTHguide

FOR THE WEEK OF MAY 1, 2016

"A Guiding Presence"



## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

Matthew 5:6, Deuteronomy 6:1-9, Proverbs 22:6, Ephesians 6:4, John 14:16

## REFLECTION AND STUDY

### DAY 1

Parenting is perhaps one of the most difficult things one can do in life. There is no greater responsibility or privilege than raising a family. The truth is that parenting doesn't end when your kids go off to school, leave the nest or get married. Even being a grandparent is an ongoing responsibility. Parents don't get to practice, and there are days when we just don't know what to do. Raising kids, and especially Godly kids, isn't easy for anyone, whether you are a parent, grandparent, relative, or anyone else with influence over our next generation. At times we try to do things our own way, but when things get rough we cry out to God. **Read Matthew 5:6**

- How difficult was it to raise your children?
- How did God sustain you through the more challenging times?

**Praise God for the privilege of raising a family.**

### DAY 2

The Holy Spirit is available to all of us, and He is the ultimate source of our life's power, even when it comes to parenting. The challenge before us is bringing up spiritually centered children and young adults. To do that we need to learn to tap into the Holy Spirit in our lives. **Read Deuteronomy 6:1-9.** No matter what your role is, you will influence the next generation in some way. God commands us to raise Godly children that will follow Christ and change the world from generation to generation. By providing spiritual direction for each generation, God offers us a promise of positive results and outcomes.

- What commands does God give in Deuteronomy 6:1-9?
- What are some tangible ways you could implement these commands in your daily life?

**Pray that your children would be receptive to your teaching. Ask God to reveal opportunities to direct and guide the children in your care.**

### DAY 3

**Read Proverbs 22:6.** In the United States, we are two and a half generations into biblical illiteracy. In the 1950's things began to shift, and in the 60's many parents chose to move their children away from the church completely. Some of us don't know the Bible well because no one took the time to teach it to us or to challenge us to grow in God's Word. Most of us want our children to be everything God intends them to be, but we outsource the responsibility of spiritual training to "the more qualified." We look to the church and Christian schools to do it for us. While partnering with the local church is a great way to strengthen our children's faith, too often we abdicate our leadership role. It is imperative that we understand we have a personal responsibility in passing faith to the next generation, and that we will leave a legacy for our children whether we plan to or not.

- How are you creating a legacy of spiritual influence and awakening for our children instead of pushing them away from God?

**Pray and ask God to help you take responsibility for your part in our next generation's spiritual development.**

## DAY 4

**Read Ephesians 6:4.** All of us have some level of dysfunction in our life. We are not perfect. If we are not careful, the dysfunction in our lives and homes passes through us directly to our kids. We must **choose** the legacy we want to pass on to the next generation. Will we choose to pass on a legacy that leads our children to Christ or will we choose to pass on a legacy of dysfunction? We need the courage to say, "No! This stops with me. I don't want to pass this on to my kids." The reality is that we choose where and how to spend our time. We have the choice to be who God wants us to be and pour into our children and the next generation.

- What kind of legacy did your parents pass on to you?
- How much of your time is invested in your kids?

**Pray for the courage to break cycles of dysfunction in your family.**

## DAY 5

As parents, we are our children's primary examples and teachers of faith. That doesn't mean preaching or wagging our fingers in their face, but instead living out our faith for them to see. Our kids will do what they see, not what they hear. They follow the example we set with our actions. As their example, it's up to us to do our part to be the face of Jesus on earth. God doesn't want us to do this alone! Ideally the church partners with you and your family to bring the wholeness of Christ into your home. Implementing rules without a relationship is recipe for rebellion. Having relationships without rules will lead to chaos. We can find this balance, but not without the leading and strength of the Holy Spirit.

- How are you living out your faith for your children to see?
- Have you found a balance between rules and relationship?

**Ask God to help you live out your faith in a way your children can model. Praise God for your church community.**

## DAY 6

Some of you might say, "I don't have kids..." or "My kids are grown and left a long time ago..." or "I've had a tough road with my kids, so none of this applies to my situation." No matter what, you can be an influence on our next generation. Sometimes that means being the prayer warrior for our kids. When we can't be with our kids, Jesus can be. Sometimes we don't know exactly how to pray for our children but the Holy Spirit can lead us to the right words. Every day, our kids are making choices, some good and some not so good. We can all pray that our kids choose the best out of everything that is offered to them. We are all God's children and Deuteronomy 6 says we are to do everything in our power to raise up the next generation so that they will all be holy children. When we follow the leading of the Holy Spirit He will empower us to do, just that! **Read John 14:16.**

- Think about all the young people your life touches that you have an influence on.
- What are you doing to help these children follow God's teachings?

**Pray for our children and the choices they will face today. Commit to praying for them daily. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the right words to say.**

## DAY 7

Today is your "Sabbath" and a time for reflection. How has God been speaking to you over the week? Use what the Lord has said to you to remold and reshape your life. If you are having trouble hearing God's voice, slow down or even stop what you are doing so that the busyness of life's demands do not squelch the whispers of God's language of love upon your heart.